

THE LONDON MERCURY

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EDITORIAL NOTES

WE write just after the thaw which has followed the Great Frost. Meteorology, in a general way, is not our province; the frost was undoubtedly bad for farmers, bad for gardeners, bad for motorists, bad for horses, bad for hunting, bad for football, bad for the boatrace crews, bad for the delicate and the underclad, good for skaters, garage proprietors, and plumbers. For ourselves, we suffered from the normal distresses of the ordinary citizen, including frozen pipes. But since the frost went on so long we were almost sorry that it did not go on longer. We seemed to be in sight of a chance which will probably never again appear in our lifetime of a frozen Thames and a Thames Fair.

Frost Fairs

DAY after day the ice crept down the river, which was ultimately frozen over near Windsor. The experts tell us—no doubt correctly—that the reason why the Thames has not frozen over in London for a hundred years is that the embankments have narrowed and deepened the stream and increased the strength of its flow. Yet even these restrictions might be overcome by frost severe enough: and this one froze over the Arno at Florence. It would have been worth while to have had a week more of it for the sake of seeing one of those curious London ebullitions on the ice which have not occurred for centuries. The ordinary London hawker and entertainment vendor probably have never heard of the activities which have been pursued on the Thames during previous frosts. But once the river had frozen over the natural instincts of the people would doubtless have led to the precise repetition of all the old features of the fairs. We should have had tents for refreshments (though whether, under the reign of Hicks, they would have been allowed licenses is doubtful) booths, side-shows, music, coconut shies, pedlars, and tumblers, and, last of all, a

few records of the event actually printed on the ice. We believe that every previous frost fair has left its little legacy of broadsheets containing either doggerel poems or an account of the frost and the fair. Had the opportunity arisen we ourselves intended to produce a small supplement of this number printed on the middle of the Thames by Blackfriars Bridge. It was a modest ambition, and one the fulfilment of which would have done no harm to anyone. Now, alas, it will never be achieved; the iced cup has been dashed from our lips.

St. Paul's Bridge

ST. PAUL'S BRIDGE, happily, will continue not to exist. The House of Commons must be congratulated on throwing out the Bill which was to authorise the extension of the time during which the Bridge House Trustees could exercise their powers in arranging for the building of a new bridge leading up to St. Paul's. The prospects has always alarmed the cathedral authorities; many traffic experts believe that the bridge would not be much use, and many more are certain that if it were used, it would merely lead to a still greater confusion and congestion of traffic in the City. What is really wanted is a Bill which will put the Bridge House organisation on a new footing. At present the Trustees interpret in the narrowest sense their statutory power to expend their very considerable funds on bridges in the City of London. If they were allowed to have their way they would gradually erect bridge by bridge until the Thames flowed through one long tunnel reaching from the Temple to the Tower. There are those monies, and those men desperately looking about for silly schemes to spend them on, while Waterloo Bridge is still in splints, and Charing Cross Bridge is still unbuilt owing to the difficulty of coming to a financial arrangement satisfactory to all parties concerned. We are not amongst those who like interfering with charitable and kindred trusts; but here is a case where a legacy from the past is being administered in a very crippling manner, and where, moreover, we can feel quite sure that our ancestors would wish the spirit rather than the letter of their bequest to future generations to be observed. The City of London as such, is no more than a picturesque survival.

The Censorship

AS we write the case of one more suppressed novel is sub judice. The Police have also, it is alleged, seized in the post a volume of manuscript poems by Mr. D. H. Lawrence whilst it was being transmitted through the post from the author to his agent. We have read Miss Norah James's novel *Sleeveless Errand*; we are not yet apprised of the nature of Mr. Lawrence's poems. Public pronouncements about both of them will have appeared before this number is printed; but we cannot very well say much until we hear what the views of the authorities are on the subject. We must

even hold up until next month our opinion of Miss James's novel. We intend to return to the subject. Several questions are involved quite apart from the question of prohibiting the sale of certain books. On that matter we expressed our views somewhat fully when a recent work by Miss Radclyffe Hall was suppressed. One incidental matter which deserves full discussion arises out of the allegation that the Police pursued review copies of Miss James's book to the houses of reviewers and induced them to surrender their property—which had never been exposed for sale. We have yet to learn that the mere possession of a book, however startling its character, is as yet an offence or a matter indeed, which can properly come within the cognizance of the Police. Another question which deserves close consideration arises out of the interception of an author's manuscript in the post, presumably, or possibly, before any independent person has had an opportunity of forming an opinion about it. There is, no doubt, a certain logical case for this action ; but we cannot pursue logic too far or we shall find ourselves trying to stop people from writing, or even thinking, things which we dislike. As we say, however, our information is at present imperfect, and we must check our desire to add more. All we can add safely is that in our view the statements often made by extreme opponents of the censorship are as absurd as those made by its extreme supporters.

The Abbey Sacristy

THE debate about the proposed new Sacristy at Westminster Abbey still drags its slow length along. The defenders of the change have addressed a series of earnest and elaborate letters to the *Times* (which is now a splendid forum for such discussions) and its opponents are as obstinate as ever in their opposition. As it seems to us it is not for the opponents to suggest an alternative. Their point is that a new sacristy in the position at present proposed should be regarded as utterly out of the question ; and that it is the business of the authorities at Westminster either to find some other site which will not interfere with any important view of the Abbey, or else to continue to submit to the inconvenience from which they have so long suffered. If the sacristy is not built at all we can hardly conceive any clergyman declining the Deanery on that account.

The G.B.S. Foundation

WHEN Mr. Bernard Shaw was awarded the Nobel Prize he disposed of the very considerable sum of lucre which is attached to the award in a manner characteristically original and generous. He founded with it an *Anglo-Swedish Literary Foundation* which was to expend the interest of its fund on translations of works, classic and modern, from one language into the other, and their subsequent publication. The income of the fund is about £400 a year ; this means that there should be a steady stream

of translations, many of which would probably never have been made had it not been for the generosity of Mr. Shaw. The first volume has just been issued. It is published by Jonathan Cape and contains *Easter and Other Plays* by Strindberg. Many, if not most, of Strindberg's works have already appeared in this country; some of them in bad translations or in a very hole-and-corner way. The full merit of the scheme will be realised when we begin to be given books which a commercial publisher would hardly have undertaken. Anybody who has ever had anything to do with reading for a commercial publisher knows that foreign books frequently come along which are very interesting, and even of permanent value, but of which one is forced to say, in common honesty, that they have a very remote chance of a profitable sale. The Anglo-Swedish Foundation will doubtless be delighted when any of its books has a financial success; but in choosing the books its sole criterion is merit.

A Useful Model

IT seems to us that the scheme might well be made a model for others of the same kind relating this country with countries other than Sweden. Translations are a great bond between nations, particularly when they are good translations, and when the books are humane books. Our import of foreign literature is at present entirely haphazard; many good foreign books take generations to reach us, many great foreign classics have never yet been put into English, many that have been translated are now inaccessible, and we often get from a particular country mainly literature which gives us a one-sided view of that country. We cannot often expect an author like Mr. Shaw to hand over £8,000 for such a purpose; really eminent authors have usually far too many creditors. But there must be plenty of rich people with a peculiar affection for one foreign country or another and small sums in this field produce quite considerable results.

A Masterpiece of Invective

IN a recent number of the *Edinburgh Review* there was an article by Sir Andrew Macphail on the late Sir Henry Wilson which struck us as about the most devastating review article which has been published in the last hundred years. With two other studies this work has now been published by John Murray in a book entitled *Three Persons*. We are not concerned with the political and military career of Sir Henry Wilson or the precise justice of Sir Andrew's observations about him. But we can say, from a purely artistic point of view, that the essay is a masterpiece of analysis, arrangement, and ironic invective, and as such may be commended to connoisseurs.

Charles M'Evoy

CHARLES M'EVOY has died at Bath at the age of forty-nine, cut off in his prime like his brother Ambrose the painter. His first play, *David Ballard*, was produced by the Stage Society in 1907 ; it was followed by a large number of one act plays and by several full-length pieces of which much the most successful was *The Likes of 'Er*. He was not a great playwright, but he was a pioneer of the modern realistic manner and important for a brief period in his early career when the English stage was beginning to merge from the wilderness of the late Victorian age. It was the period of Mr. Granville-Barker's season at the Court, of Mr. Galsworthy's *The Silver Box*, of the first serious attempts to produce Mr. Shaw's works in bulk, of the early productions of the Manchester School, and of the Stage Society's most renowned and useful activities. Some of the playwrights who were most seriously discussed in those seven years before the War have lapsed into oblivion ; Charles M'Evoy may follow them ; but he, like many others, did great service to the Drama.

The State of the Theatre

WE frequently complain, and there is generally all too much reason to complain, of the condition of the English Theatre. But at least, even in the leanest years now, it is in a better condition than it was in the 'nineties. Those who feel depressed about the Theatre, and wish for a draft of optimism, may always get one from certain documents of the period which survive. What Mr. Shaw said, perhaps, may not be regarded as evidence. He was a wit, an eccentric, a man who was determined that the Theatre should become a platform for the proclamation of his own political and moral opinions, a man who might have been as impatient with pure poetry as he was with mere rubbish. Yet the reprinted volumes of his dramatic criticisms, when all discounts have been allowed, throw a dreadful light upon the Theatre which it was his painful duty to attend. And an equally distressing picture may be found in the two volumes of Mr. Max Beerbohm's *Dramatic Criticisms*, which we have recently been reading. Mr. Beerbohm had no axe to grind : he merely wished to be amused or moved, and to hear on the stage language which people might conceivably speak. Night after night for years he went, often finding himself bored and repelled by the dismal unreality of plays which almost all his colleagues were greeting as masterpieces. There were the wallowing sentimentalists, the mechanical imitators of mechanical Frenchmen, the supposedly serious dramatists who had taken small doses of Ibsen. In a generation all their works have perished. Nothing survives from the epoch except Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and one or two early plays by Bernard Shaw, whom Mr. Beerbohm regarded as an exceedingly promising young writer. Probably a dozen plays have been seen in London in the last year which were better than the great majority

of the works which Mr. Beerbohm reviewed. Literature, as the late Henry Arthur Jones observed in his Will, has not returned in full strength to the theatre. But it is returning and the process is likely to be accelerated. It must be admitted that in part the improvement must be attributed to the fact that millions of imbeciles who used to go to the theatre now go to the cinema instead : in other words, the standard of demand has risen. But a very important positive agency has been the work of the private producing societies and of the small theatres which now put themselves at the service of the larger ones by producing plays for a week or two in an inexpensive and experimental manner.

The Stage Society and Others

AT this moment the most successful play in London is, we suppose, *Journey's End*, which many people think the equal of anything which has been produced since the War. We do not know whether this work was ever submitted to managers before the author thought of the Stage Society ; if it was there is no reason to be surprised at its rejection. The fact remains that it was produced by the Stage Society, and that the moment one audience had seen it at a Stage Society performance its production elsewhere was absolutely certain. Precisely the same applied to *Young Woodley* and *The Lady With a Lamp*, both of which were first put on by that very ingeniously constituted body The Arts Theatre Club. While we are mentioning *Journey's End*, by the way, we may add that its entrepreneur, Mr. Maurice Browne, is to be congratulated upon making a success at the very beginning of his attack upon London. Mr. Browne, born and educated in England, spent nearly twenty years in America, where he did very gallant service with little theatres at Chicago and elsewhere. He is passionately interested in the drama and it seems likely that during the next few years he will become an outstanding figure in the English theatre, and provide us with a house which we shall be able, if we choose, to frequent with the certainty that any play which is being performed in it will neither bore nor disgust us.

The Universal Mr. Wallace

RECENT travellers on the Continent will have noticed that in many countries the booksellers' window displays consist almost entirely of row upon row of the works of Mr. Edgar Wallace, who has superseded not merely all other English authors but most of his foreign competitors as well. The tidal wave of Edgar Wallace has now reached America. We have just been reading in an American magazine a page advertisement which is headed : " For the First Time in America. EDGAR WALLACE. England's Favourite Mystery Writer "—with underneath : " Sample These Amazing Tales AT OUR RISK." If the description of the tales is accurate " our risk " should give place to " your risk." These are

amongst the recommendations of the handsomely bound set of Mr. Wallace's works :

All England is *Wallace* mad ! Almost unknown three years ago ; to-day he is a sensation. Every book he has published in America has immediately joined the best sellers. WHY ? Because only Wallace has the eerie power to make your flesh creep,—your blood chill—your hair stand on end,—at the gruesome and terrific situations his magic pen portrays. For mystery—horror—action—romance ; for a thrill a minute, a shock on every page, you must read Edgar Wallace.

Every other writer of mystery and horror yarns pales into significance beside this man who can not witness his own moving pictures because they are so gruesome. Midnight shrieks echoing down cobwebbed corridors. The clank of chains in mysterious secret passages. Sudden shots coming from nowhere, the silent assassin's knife getting in its gruesome work under the noses of Scotland Yard's keenest detectives. That is Edgar Wallace.

And now for the first time in America you can get the greatest of these masterpieces of mystery and horror in a uniform binding, on fine book paper. Four full length novels, over 1200 pages of thrills, crime, mystery, and adventure. Beautifully bound in red and black cloth, clearly printed on fine white paper. Here is your opportunity to know Edgar Wallace at his best, at absolutely no risk of loss to yourself.

But it wasn't really in order to quote these strange invitations to pleasure that we began talking about this advertisement. There was something else in it.

Can it be True?

THE allegation is made in this advertisement of the man who " has taken Great Britain by Storm " that

One out of every four books sold in the British Empire is a book by EDGAR WALLACE.

The English Catalogue of Books (Publishers' Circular Limited, 92nd year of issue) which has just appeared states that in the year 1928 14,399 books were published in this country. It is true that no fewer than 81 of them were by Mr. Edgar Wallace, who, to use the colloquialism, has the late Alexandre Dumas stewed. But even at that it is difficult to believe that Mr. Wallace's sales within the Empire can amount to the annual millions which they must amount to if this startling statement is accurate. We don't particularly mind ; energy and fertility such as Mr. Wallace's deserve their rewards, and he certainly ministers very ably to what appears to be, at the moment, a universal craving. But one out of four !

The Output of Books

THE figure for the year's publications is the largest on record : the increase is steady. Over ten thousand of the books were new books
The Editor remarks :

The classified analytical table appended gives full details of the numbers and kinds of books published in each class of literature during the year, and includes

the previous year's totals for purposes of comparison. As is to be expected, most of the classes of literature show an increase, but there are unexpected decreases as well that may reflect changes in popular demand. The principal *increases* are as follows:—Fiction (+161); Technology (+112); Biography (+86); Juvenile (+74); Sociology (+63); Philosophy (+41); Games, Sports, etc. (+40). There are also lesser increases in Fine Arts, Agriculture and Gardening, Military and Naval, Law, Literature, Philology and Business. The *decreases* are as follows:—Poetry and Drama (—87), which loses the whole of the increase it scored last year; Medicine (—42); Science (—23); Religion (—19). Classes that remain practically stationary are Education, Domestic Arts, Music, History, Geography, and General Works.

As will be noted from the above, and from an examination of the table, Fiction has secured an increasingly dominating position. One-quarter of the entire production of our publishers is made up of works of fiction. This is neither good nor bad (much of the fiction issued is of greater informative and literary value than many of the books labelled "Travel," "Religion," "Biography," etc.), but it does point unmistakably to the existence of a great and growing public whose main interest in books is recreative reading. The growth and development of the recreational book since the days of Samuel Richardson is a literary phenomenon that has never received adequate attention from our philosophers or literary historians.

What we seem to want is a Dr. Marie Stopes of literature, but we don't quite see how a successful campaign can be waged.

Forty Books a Day

ALMOST exactly forty books a day are being published. Some of these are reprints, some are educational, over a thousand are described as Juvenile. But when all these have been put aside, and all the Scientific books and even the solid thousand of Religious books, there remain a number so enormous that even the most zealous student of literature cannot be sure of overlooking something. For instance, there were actually between four and five hundred entirely new books of Poetry and Drama: who can blame the public and even the critics if they occasionally overlook meritorious works? The new novels numbered roughly 1,500, more than four a day. A production so enormous cannot reasonably be defined as a good thing. The 1,500 includes a large number which have no literary value and no prospects for sale: while in many instances two authors of a particular kind of story are getting a bad living instead of one getting a good one. We are thinking here, of course, of books which are produced from entirely commercial motives. We hardly ever meet a publisher who does not think that far too many novels are published; most of them knowingly produce too many themselves, partly because they feel that if they publish enough some of them will succeed, and partly because unless a publisher has a considerable "list" of novels, novel manuscripts will not reach him. Nobody, however, has ever been able to suggest any machinery whereby the volume of this torrent of printed paper can be reduced. On the contrary, there seems to be every likelihood that the

steady increase will be maintained indefinitely and that twenty years hence people will be sadly sighing for the good old leisurely days when only 14,000 books a year were published, and people really had a chance of keeping in touch with current literary production.

Seasonal Books

A PHENOMENON, however, which may possibly be modified is the Seasonal nature of publication. That the great time for the stocking of their shops by booksellers should be Autumn is reasonable. In that season (as our friends so frequently remind us) "the evenings are drawing in," and in spite of the competition of the wireless a great many people still do read books in the evenings if they cannot find any more congenial occupation. Moreover, the Autumn season comes to a climax with Christmas when large numbers of the population are giving each other books. The motives are no doubt mixed, and it is possible that a great many books, particularly of the more elevated kind which are purchased as Christmas presents, remain for years unread. Still, they are bought, which is a good thing for authors and publishers. The Editor of *The English Catalogue* is puzzled by the fact that books on the Fine Arts tend to gravitate towards the late Autumn: there can be little doubt that the Christmas present habit accounts for this. But who would account for the fact that Juvenile books have a particular burst of activity around July? Surely the publishers cannot imagine that the children, at the beginning of their Summer holidays are anxious to read only books which are "just out"? In recent years, it is interesting to note, the old emphasis upon the Autumn has not been so great as it was: there are now definite Spring and Summer seasons for new books as well as an Autumn season. As for the seasons otherwise, we have just come across a passage in Horace Walpole which describes the English weather. He says that we are quite absurd in our habit of complaining about bad weather as though it were exceptional, and that had the English people never read Virgil they probably would not have invented names to distinguish one season from another.

Fine Printing

WE commend the attention of those of our readers who are interested in Fine Books to the Golden Cockerel Chaucer, a note on which will be found at the end of this number. This first volume of the *Canterbury Tales* can fairly be put beside the same Press's noble *Troilus and Criseide*, and there can be no doubt that collectors of the future will scramble feverishly for them. As we go to Press we receive also the first volume of the Nonesuch Press Shakespeare, a reprint with variants of the First Folio which will not merely be an ornament of the bookcase but an admirable working edition—not the kind of books that one is afraid to

touch. These two Presses and the Shakespeare Head Press at Stratford—quite apart from the numerous and interesting small Presses—are now publishing Fine Books on a scale never before approached in this country.

A General Index to the London Mercury

IN October next we shall, under providence, complete our tenth year of issue. Several readers have suggested to us that we should celebrate the occasion, and assist students, by publishing a general index to the contents of our first twenty volumes. We should be glad to do this ; but it would be a laborious and expensive job, and before definitely committing ourselves, we should like to have a certain number of assurances from Librarians and others that such an index would be useful to them and that they would purchase it at a modest price. “ Send a post card now,” as the saying goes.



HENRY WILLIAMSON
by Powys Evans

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE

THE Leeds Public Libraries are to be congratulated upon the issue of a second series of "What to read" pamphlets. Had the British Museum given birth to the idea it would have been doing little more than its duty; had even the Manchester Public Libraries led the way they would have merely adorned a well-known tale of Mancunians; but the City Librarian of Leeds is entitled to the highest praise both for the originality of the scheme and for the admirable manner in which he has carried it out. The new series includes pamphlets by Sir Charles Roberts, upon what to read in modern history, by Professor Thomson upon zoology and by Professor Dakin upon biology.



THERE will soon be as many private presses as there are antique shops in London. A prospectus has been issued by the Aquila Press, which proposes to print, by hand, and in strictly limited editions, "literary works of high merit not otherwise easily accessible," but in their list of proposed books there is not one which cannot be already easily obtained, with the possible exception of the odes and sonnets of de la Vega. Only an exceptional beauty of type and rarity of issue can justify the production of a new edition of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.



THE Royal Institute of British Architects announces a competition for the design of a national sign for petrol filling stations and garages. The sign is to take the place of the numerous hideous advertisements which usually disfigure the neighbourhood of garages. Perhaps it might be better to have a competition for designs of petrol pumps and garages themselves, for at present they require precious little advertisement other than is afforded by their very presence. However, it is encouraging to note that some approach is to be made in the direction of the preservation of the country from such wanton and unsightly plasterings.



MR. James Connell has died at the age of 76. He was an Irishman born, pursued a variety of occupations, finished as secretary of a Friendly Society, and wrote divers volumes including *The Confessions of a Poacher*, *The Horse and How to Treat Him* and *Socialism and the Survival of the Fittest*. He was a very well-known figure in Fleet Street; a large, sturdy, shaggy, grey-moustached, clear-eyed man, with loose tweed clothes and a red tie. Many knew him by sight; few were aware that he was the author of the English words of *The Red Flag*. It isn't a very good poem, but it goes very well to the melancholy tune, so long as one doesn't think of the words. Should the Red Flag ever wave over the British Empire Mr. Connell will have his place with Rouget de l'Isle.

MR. Victor Plarr is dead at the age of 65. The obituarists treated him mainly as Librarian of the Royal College of Surgeons: he was that, and did very important official work in that capacity; but he had his moment as a literary man. Of refugee Alsatian extraction, he was educated at Tonbridge, and Worcester College, Oxford; and in the 'nineties, as a young man, was a prominent member of the Rhymers' Club and a friend of most of the Yellow Book circle. A few very pretty poems by him may be found in the Books of the Rhymers' Club; his reminiscences of the period were set down in a pleasant little book about Ernest Dowson, which was published in 1914.



WE regret to hear of the death, at a great age, of Mrs. Charlotte Carmichael Stopes, the veteran Shakespearean scholar, and mother of the celebrated Dr. Marie. Mrs. Stopes spent most of her life on the details of Elizabethan, and particularly Shakespearean, history. Her books included *Shakespeare's Family*, *William Hunnis and the Revels of the Chapel Royal*, *Burbage and Shakespeare's Stage*, *The Third Earl of Southampton*, and *Shakespeare's Industry*. She was a wonderfully industrious chaser of facts; not so good as architect of a book or painter of a portrait. But she served well the causes she cared for, and, to the end, when very old and frail, she retained great enthusiasm and charm. Her books will always be referred to by Shakespearean students.



THERE is in preparation, for 1932, a collected edition of the published and unpublished letters of Sir Walter Scott. Professor Grierson of Edinburgh University is the editor, and Messrs. Constable, 10 Orange Street, W.C.2, are to issue the book. One appeal for new letters has already been made in response to which there has been received, *inter alia*, a series of transcripts of letters from the Librarian of the Royal Library at Windsor, with full permission to republish. We conceive that these must include letters to George IV, with whom Sir Walter was a great favourite. If any of our readers care to send letters or transcripts to editor or publisher they will be carefully copied and returned.

POETRY

SIX POEMS

*Little Village—Spring**(A Landscape by Daniel Garbee).*

1.

OFTEN I have gone long journeys
 To beautiful places,
 That I might behold the soul of beauty ;
 Only to learn, too late,
 This of all beautiful things :
 That even as one praises,
 Breathed upon too roughly by the breath of praise,
 Beauty passes.

2.

Not that beauty dies,
 Or suffers essential change ;
 But elsewhere, withdrawn,
 In hardly accessible places,
 Ever elusive,
 She finds new virtue
 And builds new shrines—

3.

Before my coming she has fled
 From the honour of palaces,
 From the excellence of cities,
 From the dignity of mountains,
 From the loveliness of rivers,
 From the graces of trees—

4.

But here, here, I have found her,
 At last immutable,
 In this Little Village,
 In immortal Spring !—
 Where the light lies warm upon the slopes,
 Where the white wooden houses gleam
 Like temples of marble in haunted groves ;
 Where upward spires are lost
 Among the winged hosts of trees—

5.
 A promise, woven in haze,
 Soon to be fulfilled,
 Of green and gold and azure,
 And silvery grey,
 Rests on the upper hills :
 Here in the valley, a tree,
 Perfect in fulfilment,
 A Tree of Eden,
 Holds up white branches of exquisite flower.

6.
 What does it matter
 If even a village like this
 Lay in the Spring light
 On a hill-side by the Delaware ?
 But it matters greatly that one man,
 Of thought, and vision, and dream,
 To the sound of the music of his own soul,
 Created this village
 To be for beauty
 A resting place, for ever !

7.
 In your mind, O friend,
 Was builded this village of delight :
 In your mind
 Grew the Tree of the Knowledge of Beauty,
 To stand in full flower
 For ever !

The Moth

THE spent moon low upon the hill
 Silvers half of the broken crest :
 Small hours go shivering to the west.
 Dear Ghost, are you a coward still ?
 —The white moth, pausing at the sill,
 Delays his quest :
 So, near my breast,
 You pause. Here I shall wait until
 The day breaks. Desolate, I fill
 The world with prayer, to you addressed :
Come in, come in ! Ah, fear you lest
 Something of ill
 Undo your will,
 O Ghost ! if you should be my guest ?

Sonnet

I HAVE made friends with Time, and now we go
 Our rounds together. When he dulls his scythe
 In fields of obdurate hours, I help him blow
 Upon the blade, and whet it.—We are blithe
 At work together, singing, driving flowers
 Beyond their prime, bringing young flesh to dust,
 Breaking down cottages and crushing towers
 With touch of mildew or decay or rust,—
 I crying laggard that he waits too long
 A woman's beauty or an emperor's crown ;
 And he impatient, for a poet's song,
 To spare a city or to save a clown.
 So some day we two friends shall disagree,
 And Time will find he can dispense with me.

Literacy

THE sum of all my knowledge then is—you !
 Look you abate not,—cease not to be true :
 Lest in a word, a casual nod, a glance,
 You prove all knowledge to be ignorance !

Autobiography

AVERT your eyes ! This creature whom you see,
 Ill-favoured, old, was once beloved of me :
 Run, lest foreboding seize you ! I aver,
 That what I seemed then was beloved of her !

Genesis

THE gracious moon, reflected in a pond,
 Betrays the young man's heart and makes him fond^v;
 Until he thinks the one he loves no less
 Than the First Cause of all such loveliness.

FRANK MACDONALD

Temple at Paestum

RAVEN joy for hair he had,
 A pagan body nude and glad,
 A ruddy life, a three in one
 Being so saturate with sun,
 So dark with dusky earth, so bright
 With the simplicity of light,
 And moving, in that gilded hour,
 As pollen loosens from a flower.

And as a flower the temple's stone
 Blooms in the burning grass alone.
 Pillars in soft recession hold
 The sky a prisoner to gold,
 And the warm noon a captive lies
 Old with the hours, in the rise
 And tread of steps where Grecians trod
 To keep white holiday with God.

Up the steep stair he swung, the boy
 Apollo chiselled for his joy ;
 A young ambassador to old,
 Carved when the saffron tale was told
 Down centuries of stone, and come
 To being from the tireless thumb
 That wrought these ancient ribs, these skies
 Those feet, and my reflecting eyes.

IDA GRAVES

STATION B-U-N-K*

By H. Le B. BERCOVICI

A SMOOTHLY swift elevator brings you up to the seventeenth floor as effortlessly as if you were lint being sucked up by a vacuum-cleaner. It disgorges you into a beautifully carpeted apartment of rich hangings and rococo furniture all compact.

You are in the reception room of Station B-U-N-K of the World-Wonder Broadcasting Corporation. Curtains and hanging lamps like those in the lobby of a movie cathedral beguile your senses. The telephone switchboard, discreetly placed in a corner of the room, is disguised as an early Jacobean chest. But its attendant, her red lips streaking across her face like two roan fillies racing as she chews her gum, is not Jacobean: she is Bronx, and the tapping of the typewriter which engages her spare moments is a jarring note in the thickly carpeted stillness.

As you look around the room you see queer drums with taut cone-shaped skins and black-lined borders. The lisp-touched drone of speech is now heard, and this speech comes from the drums. You notice, then, a glass door unobtrusively showing at one end of the reception room.

You look through, pushing the grey silk curtains apart, and see a huge square room with a piano at one end, naked electric wires running through it, fierce lights blazing, and a man facing a round piece of metal surmounting a pole, on which you can read the letters B-U-N-K. The room looks like the execution chamber in Sing Sing, and the microphone through which the man is talking seems to be a new kind of killing tool.

The man consults his wrist watch nervously. The big silent room and the glaring lights make him uncomfortable. He looks at his watch again: only a minute and a half to go. Suppose he is left alone with this world-hungry microphone before him! But a few seconds before the time is up, a lean young man strides through the reception room, gestures to the speaker to finish, and wildly waves his hands. His signal is seen by two youths in a chamber beyond.

These youths face a large keyboard, the control. They deftly manipulate its plugs and buttons, and wave their arms in return. The young man shakes the microphone, thus dislodging the packed carbon, then puts it down, and waves his arms again.

"This is Station B-U-N-K," he says, "operating on a wave length of 294 metres, equal to 1020 kilocycles, by virtue of the authority of the Federal Radio Commission. This Station is owned by the World-Wonder Broadcasting Corporation, with broadcasting studios and offices at 479 West 49th street. Our transmitting station and plant is located at Kitzmiller, New Jersey. This is Station B-U-N-K. Stand by, please. . . ."

* We reprint this, by kind permission of the Editor, from the *American Mercury*. It illustrates, amongst other things, the advantages of the English system of financing Broadcasting.

The studio, you suddenly perceive, now contains a pianist ready to play, a violinist tuning up, and a 'cellist relieved at being free from his heavy burden.

The 'cellist hands the young man a slip of paper, and he reads into the microphone :

" This is Station B-U-N-K. We are now presenting the Rosenguilder Trio, composed of Mr. Jacques Rosenguilder, violinist ; Mr. Lloyd Sunnenstein, 'cellist, and Mrs. Rosenguilder, pianist, in a selection of popular and classical music. The first number of this popular trio will be *The Beautiful Blue Danube*. One minute, please. This is Station B-U-N-K and you will now listen to the Rosenguilder Trio in *The Beautiful Blue Danube*."

The energetic young man dashes out, the Rosenguilder Trio heaves into the music, and the bosom of Mrs. Rosenguilder (which, unfortunately, cannot be broadcast) keeps time to the song's bulging rhythm.

Is this the reason, you wonder, for the existence of the magnificent Station B-U-N-K ? Is it for this that there was conjured up the ornate reception room, the padded studio, the complicated electric machinery with its two guardian angels, the mysterious transmitting station in New Jersey ?

No, there are higher things awaiting.

II.

These higher things are the hours that Station B-U-N-K has for sale. They are its stock in trade, as similar hours are the stock in trade of its brothers and rivals, Stations J-U-N-K and B-O-S-H.

It gets ten dollars a minute for them from its clients, the advertisers. The ten dollars a minute pays only for the bare time : the advertisers have to pay for their own programmes, though if they use a sufficiently large amount of time the studio may help them out.

The station itself faces a serious problem. When it doesn't sell enough time to keep its hours full,—and they must be full, or it will be taken off the air and its wave-length allocated to some anxiously waiting rival—it must give a fairly decent programme at its own expense. Once it was able to get by by playing classical selections on its phonograph, but it knows if it does so too often now the Federal Radio Commission will take it off the air. That is why there is all the feverish activity that you see—all the hard hunting for amateurs willing, for the glory of art, to fill in unsold time. It is the director's job to find the obscurest musical groups, the aspiring trios and chamber quartettes and neighbourhood sopranos, and induce them to come and sing and play or yodel for the publicity he promises, but seldom furnishes. This publicity he reserves as much as possible for his paying clients or his girl friends, and, besides, what roto-gravure editor wants the meat-bali face of Madame Gatalani, even though her spaghetti and olive-oil fed voice may be as smooth as gold ?

The boys and girls of the home talent are always eager for broadcasting, and many of them are repeaters. The studio even allows small college-boy

orchestras and parish choral societies to indulge in a little restrained free advertising between numbers : anything to fill up the air with " real " music, *i.e.*, any music that does not come from a phonograph record.

The selling of time keeps the go-getting salesmen of Station B-U-N-K on the run. They have to sell something more intangible than any other form of advertising, and they have to compete with bigger stations and the chain systems that blanket the country.

Their chief problem is showing some sort of concrete result to advertisers who have come in because of the novelty—and the joy of hearing the announcer's smooth voice proclaim that Gerk's Gimlets Are the Best Gimlets, between numbers played by Gerk's Popular Gerker's Orchestra. (Joe Gerk feels very proud every Tuesday at 9.30 p.m. when the orchestra is on the air, and he imagines the whole nation tuning in.)

In the office marked Commercial, one of the star salesmen of B-U-N-K is talking to the general manager.

The star salesman is a former newspaper man with grey hair and weary eyes, and the general manager looks like a has-been wrestler, which he isn't.

There is bitter complaint in the salesman's voice.

" How can we keep that Beattall Luggage account if we don't show any results ? I talked to the boss yesterday, and he said that \$1500 a month for a few minutes a day was a lot of jack, and he wanted to be sure he got something for it. You know that with all the swell programmes being put on by the other stations they're tuning us out all the time. I'd hate to lose Beattall. It's one of our best accounts."

The general manager smiles.

" What can you do ? Say, you don't know this game yet ; I can see that easy. Your guy wants letters, uh, inquiries ? How many ? If he gets a few hundred a week, would it make him happier ? "

" It sure would," says the salesman, " You see, they're running a contest which they announce every night for the best name for their new trunk. They only get about a hundred letters a week on that, and they think they can get more by spending the same money in newspapers or magazines or even car cards. See ? We have to show them."

" Nothing easier," says the manager, and presses a button.

A stenographer comes in negligently, pencil in her ear.

" You called me, Mr. Glauberman ? "

" Sure, I called you. Take down this memo for everybody on the staff :

' All members of the staff are asked to have five letters sent, under the names of five different friends or relatives of theirs, every night for the next week to the Beattall Leather Contest, care of this station. All members are asked to sign this. Stamps will be given to everybody. S.G.' "

The salesman certainly needs this help, for his job is no easy one. First of all, he has to combat the depressing fact that one-fourth of the advertisers using radio dropped out in 1928. According to the Standard Advertising Register, the industry's statistical authority, 222 advertisers were on the rolls in 1927, and 51 dropped out in 1928.

Then, the salesman has a hard job selling because he can't tell just what he has to sell. The figures on radio sets and the number of listeners-in have never been exactly determined and differ widely. According to the National Broadcasting Corporation, the Department of Commerce says that there are 61,000,000 listeners-in in the United States on about ten million sets, but recently the corporation dropped the estimate to about 45,000,000. *Radio Retailing*, a trade paper, estimates the sets in the country at 7,500,000 and the nightly audience at 35,000,000—and *Radio Retailing* has no desire to minimize the figures.

How does the advertiser know how his advertising pulls? He very seldom relies on radio alone, but uses newspapers, magazines, and perhaps billboards and direct mail advertising also. Which brings home the bacon? Letters, applause cards, etc., are generally acceptable symptoms of a public response, but letters can be manufactured, though this is a practice not indulged in by all the stations.

Radio advertising's rôle, indeed, seems rather vague even in the minds of advertising men directly interested in it. For instance, Roy S. Durstine, of the agency of Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, of New York, in an interview with the *American Press*, a newspaper and advertising trade paper, lately declared that it is the "humanizer" of the regular advertising programme. Mr. Durstine does not recommend it to his clients in its undisguised commercial state, but hooks the entertainment value of radio programmes on to regular advertising schedules in order to create goodwill. He says:

In our Socony programmes, historical high lights of New York State and New England are broadcast. In this manner automobile travel and the use of gasoline are encouraged. This indirect advertising, which leaves an impression of goodwill to the corporations advertising on the public consciousness, also greatly stimulates the activities of the dealers, and is probably the most human of all the advertising mediums. A radio programme given by a large company makes friends, and when taken in conjunction with the usual advertising programme, gives the sales appeal a personal touch.

Unfortunately, many advertising men do not agree with Mr. Durstine, and it is difficult for the salesman to sell a hard-boiled manufacturer the idea of giving his "sales appeal a personal touch."

Many of these manufacturers, after spending \$20,000 or so for radio entertainment that may or may not reach about ten million people, find that though they have contributed to the ego of their retailers and employees listening in they haven't done much selling, and selling is what they want to do. Ungratefully, the radio audience accepts, with all the calmness of a democracy, the entertainment offered over the air. And it resents even the slightest plugging of the trade-mark or name of the philanthropic sausage- or cigarette-manufacturer engaged in "cultivating goodwill."

In the reception room of B-U-N-K, the Swami Yoganda, attired in an English sack suit and white turban in which a ruby gleams, is patiently awaiting his turn to broadcast, while Eddie Koo-Koo Jones, formerly on

Pantages Time, is ad-libbing in front of the microphone in the following humorous vein :

You know, I have to watch my step, because they're so clean over here, if I say anything dirty they will just take me off the air. Now, I understand that a lady just died who was a hostess in night clubs, and she left a million dollars to her daughter. You know it takes a good woman to make money from nuts who hang around night clubs.

Eddie now picks up his uke and pulls its strings, chanting the meanwhile in a sing-song :

Now Jack and Jill
Went down the hill
To fetch a pail of water.
Jack saw Jill
As she fell down the hill
And he saw her what-he-hadn't-oughter !

The Swami listens patiently, smiling feebly.
The announcer then comes on :

This is Station B-U-N-K. You have just listened to Eddie Koo-Koo Jones, who has given you a little string of witty comment on passing events the same as Will Rogers does. We want you all to remember that Eddie is on the air through the courtesy of Silverland Cigarettes, not a nosebleed in a ton. This is Station B-U-N-K. You will now have the pleasure of listening to the Swami Yoganda, one of the wise men of the East, in his regular weekly talk on interpreting the East to the West. Stand by, please.

A sickly smile radiates from the Swami's face, and he approaches the mike in a fawning fashion, closing his eyes. Then he pours his oily voice into the receptive ears of his unknown audience :

I am here again, dear friends, to tell you what it is that the East has to give to the West. We in the East have much that you do not have here. You of the West, of course, with your bathtubs and telephones, your wonderful invention of the radio, your automobiles, and so on, begin to think, perhaps, that there is nothing as wonderful as what you have. You forget other things . . .

Thus the Swami goes on, winding up with an appeal to his listeners not to forget that the magazine, *Astral Thoughts*, is published by him every month, and contains a swell budget of philosophy and love stories of the East.

The energetic young announcer strides in, and behind him there are fifteen girls, ranging from six to sixteen, accompanied by the station pianist, and a lean, sharp-nosed gentleman.

The announcer waves to the engineers in the glass-separated room, shakes up the mike, and adjusts it at a slightly lower level, and speaks into it :

This is Station B-U-N-K. You have just listened to Swami Yoganda on the wisdom of the East, his regular weekly series of lectures. You will now listen to the little dancers from the Mike Morris School of Dancing. The Morris School, while

giving professional dancing lessons to those anxious to get on the stage, and aiding people to get jobs on the stage, also conducts popular dancing and gymnasium classes for men and women who want to keep in trim and reduce. Mike, as his friends call him, knows all there is to know about the dance, and the exercising of the human body. This is Station B-U-N-K. Mike, himself, will now speak to you . . .

Mike advances bashfully to the mike, and begins in a good-uncle voice :

Hello, everybody ! I will now present my little cuties in a special number of singing and dancing. You will be able to recognize the dance steps as they do their stuff. I wish you could all be here with us at the studio to see these little sweet girls, or at the classes in the school. . . . The first number will be the Mike Morris Child Dancers in an imitation of the Eddie Leonard " Honey Boy " minstrels . . .

One little blonde girl, a vision poured out of a peroxide bottle, has just stepped on the toes of another little damsel whose cruel narrow eyes sit uneasily on her plump-cheeked face. " God damn you to hell ! " says the plump-cheeked lass. " You know what you can do," the other girl cheerily replies.

The children assemble in line, conscious of their legs. But their voices are pleasant, and their feet do a neat and snappy tap dance as they sing the sweet words :

Honey Lou,
I love but you.
Honey Lou
Lou . . Lou . . Lou . .
Yes, indeed,
It's you I need ;
I love you, dear,
And want you near . . .

The girls weave in and out of one another's footsteps deftly as they half hum, half sing :

Honey Lou,
I love you, Lou,
Honey Lou,
H-o-n-e-y L-o-u . . .

The Swami Yoganda, meanwhile, has gone to the room marked Programmes, and is talking to the Programme Director. This plumpish, slightly bald gentleman, who wears a white piping to his dark grey waistcoat, once had ideals. In his younger days he was director of a People's Orchestra that was heavily patronized by beer-fed German Socialists and the more liberal *Turnvereine*. To-day, he looks like a cross between an actor and an ardent Wagnerite whose soul is in Bayreuth, but whose body lies in Hoboken.

The Swami voices his complaint in unmystical language.

" What shall I do ? I'm paying my good money for this weekly time, and I don't get any letters, any subscriptions, any invitations to lecture to

ladies' clubs ! You see, it's this way, it seems to me, though I may be wrong, of course. . . ."

The Programme Director waves his hand deprecatingly.

"Go on, Professor ; talk as much as you want to ; it's your money."

"Well, at first," says the Swami in an energetic business-like fashion, "the people wrote in, and it certainly gave me a lot of business, both for the magazine and my lectures. I knew why, of course. It was the novelty of the thing. But what can we do now to recapture their interest ?"

The Programme Director frowns importantly.

"I'll tell you what to do. It will cost you a little more money, but it will be worth it. What about devoting most of your weekly half-hour to a programme of Eastern music ? Of course, between you and me," and the Programme Director puts his well-kept hands on the knees of the slim Hindu, "it won't be *real* Eastern music, see ? Things like *The Song of India*, in the jazzy version, the *Scheherazade* suite, the *Orientale*, even the *Marche Slave*, and a little odd Oriental music in between. I am sure that will wake your listeners up, Doctor. What do you think ?"

The Swami seems convinced, and shakes hands with the Programme Director.

"I think that's a good idea, very good. I'll see you to-morrow afternoon and go into the details with you. Good bye, Sir."

III.

The Programme Director goes on with his work of making up the programme. His title is no empty one.

"Let's see, next Saturday to work on . . . mmm . . . In the morning, that's not so hot . . . Oh, yes, get me Miss Lilian Ward, Rhinelander Hotel, Room 3509, please."

Miss Lilian Ward, the beautiful daughter of an old New York family, has figured in the newspapers hundreds of times in the past five years through her divorces, marriages, engagements, stage jobs, and various escapades in Gotham and Paris. Her name and rotogravured portrait are known to every woman and most of the men of the country. Of late, the poor beauty has gone bankrupt, and her cruel creditors allow her only \$12,000 a year to live upon, so she has had to go to work. She has made some money by endorsing coughless cigarettes, wrinkle-less sheets, and vanishing cold cream. Now she lends her much photographed face to the blind radio.

The Programme Director has her on the telephone :

"Miss Ward, I'll tell you the gag. We want you to give us a talk for ten minutes twice a week on the proper care of a woman's person. At about eleven in the morning, when the women we want to reach are just about getting up, see ? We'll follow up your talk with ads of toilet products, toilet waters, perfumes, cold creams, powders, etc. Your agent said that would be O.K. for you. But I got another proposition that has come up since then. That's another talk on beauty, and we'll fill that hour with dresses, silks, hats, negligées, etc. See ? I think it's a swell idea, and the

board of directors have endorsed it. Beside giving you a hundred dollars a week for each talk, we'll give you five per cent of the money we get on the ads. That'll be another hundred. . . . Oh, you want ten per cent? What about seven-and-a-half? Well, I wouldn't hesitate, Miss Ward, but it's not up to me, see? Yes, I'll call you up to-morrow morning. Good bye."

The Programme Director now glances at a typewritten ruled sheet.

"Miss Katz, is that string trio booked? And the Miglia Opera Hour? And that new Russian cantor? He's out? Well, call up somebody else on the cantor file. Saturday we must have a cantor!

"Miss Katz, it's not so bad. . . . Patriotic American League speaker in the morning, kitchen talk by these electric icebox people, household utensil talk by the vacuum-cleaners, a little semi-classical music by the Hotel Beach Orchestra. Then from two to four . . . mmm. . . . Let's see. . . . From two to four . . . We can put that Starving Armenia speaker on then . . . at two, then the woman candidate for Alderman from the West End, then a half-hour of Wagner music by our own ensemble . . . That's three . . . one more hour till we sign off the afternoon . . . Let's see . . . Let's see . . . Oh, yes, the poetry readings, the Rightway School talk, the What Chiropractic Is series and the studio ensemble in light opera airs . . . That fills the afternoon fine . . . Well-balanced, well-balanced . . . Then, let's see . . . We go on at six in the evening, Miss Marcelle Le Maire, the Florida Bluebird . . . in popular songs, half-an-hour, I'll cut her down to fifteen minutes. Cut her down to fifteen minutes, Miss Katz. Thanks, call her up.

"Then, six fifteen . . . I'll let that lawyer talk on Legal Ethics, he's good for fifteen minutes, then the studio accompanist in some nice songs, then we have that home construction talk by the Better Homes Club, for fifteen minutes. That's seven o'clock. Then we'll give 'em late news and sporting results through the courtesy of the *Daily Snooze* and associated newspapers, weather, farming reports. Then seven fifteen . . . a little classical music, that's what they always want, a little classical music now and then.

"Till seven-thirty . . . guess the Moonlight Sonata . . . Then we'll act out a little scene from Dickens for them. From *Bleak House*. No, change that, Miss Katz, that book's too highbrow, nobody knows it. Oh, yes, that old one, the scene where Oliver Twist asks for more . . . That's a hot one . . . And we may work it so they'll get that new oatmeal ad they're after. I better send a memo to the Commercial Department; you remind me, please, Miss Katz, when the programme is finally O.K.'d. That'll keep us on the air till a quarter to eight . . . Then we have that concert from the Music Shoppe phonograph store till a quarter past, then the Gotham Light Opera ensemble in *Madame Butterfly* excerpts till a quarter of nine, then that Universal Automobile Hour till a quarter to ten, then, let's see, a fifteen minute hole to fill in . . . I'll get someone with a ukelele, preferably a wisecracker, but not Koo-Koo Jones, he's too

dirty, some of the ladies have sent in letters kicking about him. Miss Katz, please look through your files and see if we got a clean ukelele player.

"Till ten thirty . . . mmm . . . mmm . . . then we switch to the Spearhead Inn, remote control, till a quarter to eleven, dance music ; then we have that Charity meeting remote at the Astor where the Mayor and Governor will talk.

"Let's see . . . that'll last till a quarter past if we get the speeches of the Governor, and the Mayor, if he comes in time. Make a memo on that for the Publicity Department, Miss Katz ; it's worth a special story.

"Then, let's see, the studio ensemble on the air in some quiet music for a change ; then eleven thirty . . . we switch back to remote for that new hotel in Brooklyn, and dance music . . . till twelve thirty ; then some snappy jazz from that Ebony Bottom's Rest in Harlem till one . . . then we sign off . . .

"Whew, that's pretty near all set. Pretty good programme, don't you think, Miss Katz ?"

Miss Katz shakes her head and jersey-covered form in assent.

"Pretty varied, eh ? That's what they want, variety. Give it to 'em and they're happy. Now, let's take Sunday . . . mmm . . . Let's see . . . We start off with the services at that new Episcopal Church in Brooklyn ; then . . ."

IV.

In the studio, the hard little girls are still dancing and singing. In the reception room there is only one person beside the gum-murdering switchboard girl. He is a grizzled, poorly-dressed man with a broken nose and large ears. He wears a black ready-made bow tie, and looks forty. Underlying his appearance of a retired sparring partner, which he is, there is an odd air of daintiness and wistfulness. His eyes are closed, and he imbibes the noise made by the mouths and feet of the dancing girls. Soon, they come to their end, and the tough bird faces the mike.

He does his own announcing in a practised radio voice, pitched a tone or two higher than the usual speaking voice, and a little deeper.

"This," he begins, "is Station B-U-N-K. You will now hear all about LOVE. I am Eddie Burns, the man who is preaching a new gospel of love, and I will teach you how to play the game of love and win it. Love in all its forms is something holy and refined, and makes for better men and women."

His voice grows in resonance and power :

Nothing ever worth while has been done without the aid of love. Hate can do nothing. It is sterile. Take the diamond. What is it ? Nothing but two elements in love with each other clinging to each other so that nothing can ever take them apart. Coal is composed of the same elements as the diamond. Why is it not as precious, as beautiful ? Because the elements therein do not cling together, are not faithful. Thus, even Nature in her wisdom is with the forces of her love. Do you not understand that Love is all ? . . .

Love, love, love . . . it is the best thing on this poor earth. Only in love can you find yourselves and find the world !

The Programme Director is in the reception room with the announcer.

" Well," he says, " that Mike Morris is sure a card, he and his tough little babies, say ! "

The announcer grins.

" Yeh, he does big things for little girls, all right, all right ! "

The announcer strides into the studio as Eddie Burns winds up his speech :

It is Love, as the poets have said, that makes the world go round, love that makes us want to be together, all of life is love, love, love. Good-bye, dear friends, and remember, love, love, love !

The announcer steps up to the mike:

Good evening, everybody. This is Station B-U-N-K. You have just listened to Eddie Burns, the popular philosopher, speak on love. This is Station B-U-N-K, operating on a wave length of 294 metres, equal to 1020 kilocycles, by virtue of the authority of the Federal Radio Commission. This station is owned and operated by the World-Wonder Broadcasting Corporation, with offices at 479 West 49th street, New York City, and transmitting station and plant at Kitzmiller, New Jersey. This is Station B-U-N-K. One minute, please.

The announcer waves his hand, and on receiving another wave from the control room, shakes up the mike, puts it down, and waves his hand once more. Another wave rewards him:

This is Station B-U-N-K. We have a very interesting programme and message for you now. Immediately following a short message from the Kraus Motorcycle Company, we will present the Kraus Trio in a programme of popular airs. The Kraus Motorcycle Company, whose motorcycles can be found all over the world, have just made a discovery of the highest value to the scientific world. In their laboratories at Lynn, Mass., they have evolved a new motor that will do nothing less than revolutionize the motor world. These motor-cycles are the latest word in speed and comfort . . .

Outside, in the reception room, is a stout German lady with a music roll that looks very worn, and a little roly-poly worn husband carrying a fat-bellied violoncello. Standing a little apart from the husband and wife is a sad, sparse, young man with a violin and a faded black bow tie.

The announcer dashes out of the studio, and brings the weary disciples of Melpomene into the brightly-lit room and up to the mike:

This is Station B-U-N-K. Through the courtesy of the Kraus Motorcycle Company you will now have the pleasure of listening to the Kraus Trio in a selection of popular airs. Their first number will be that ever-popular Southern ballade, *Mighty Lak a Rose*. Please stand by . . .

He waves his hands, the man at the controls behind the inner glass door waves back, he nods to the musicians, and the orchestra begins its wailing.

AMABEL'S AUNT

By EILEEN H. A. SQUIRE

SO this was her house !

Victor Vallance, aged twenty-nine, heir to the Vallance dollars, scrupulously dressed and prepossessing of person, parted the bushes of the shrubbery in which he hid and peered out into the moonlight.

Amabel's house, of course, in reality ; but never, in his thoughts of it, hers since he had met her aunt that afternoon. It was a long, rectangular, stone building, its face studded by ranks of shapely, illumined windows, its stone-tiled roof and dormers standing out against the pale, star-dusted sky. Coming upon it so suddenly, after he had left the drive to cut through the bushes, it had taken him by surprise. He had not expected to be so blandly confronted by the whole twinkling façade.

"It's perfect," he whispered under his breath, "Aren't I just glad I came !"

Eagerly exploring for more, he crept round under cover of the shrubs to a path that led to a formal garden, stone-paved, bedded out with hot-house flowers.

Here she walked !

And over there where a light gleamed, he guessed would be the lake. Ornamental water, with water-lilies and some swans—oh, he could see it all ! He felt that he could almost say he had been there before. It all fitted so magically with his conception of what must be her home. His having such a conception so vividly in his mind must be the outcome of his desultory reading. But he was sure he had not ever before taken half as much interest in the most vividly described scene, as he instantaneously took in the one he had imagined behind the figure of Miss Grace Tymperly.

All this had taken place after Amabel's casual introduction, in the little main street of Rushingham—and that only about six hours ago ! Victor and his father were, of course, in Rushingham for that purpose—the purpose of the introduction and all that they, up to then, had deemed it would involve. Since then, Victor's plentiful common-sense had not been a factor he consulted : he was not able to say what, after then, the introduction involved him in. That it had involved him in this nocturnal excursion was clear. For here he was, tempted out by the moon-light and his imagination (after a dinner at the hotel) on a four-mile walk, thus to steal a march on events and see, before he was supposed to have seen it, her home—where she lived. He had wanted, he told himself, to make sure that it actually would fit into all that he had traced for it in his mind's-eye since meeting Miss Grace. Well, it fitted even better than his hopes.

The serenity of it all : that was what "got" him. He could almost believe that it never could be disturbed. It had existed just as it was for so

many generations that it had the same effect of permanence upon him as had Westminster Abbey. And, as the motor-buses rocked and roared round the Abbey without changing it, so he would have liked to assure himself that the rude progress of his age would thunder itself along outside Miss Grace Tymperly's home without changing it. The reflection that he had but to marry the niece for the aunt to be left as undisturbed as he could wish was not, at the moment, of a consolatory type to him. He was not thinking of Amabel, or at least he was in no mood to think of her. To wed Amabel in order to preserve the Manor for Miss Tymperly would be like uniting himself to the forces he dreaded in order to defeat them. It would be paradoxical. He could not but see, clearly, that Amabel was herself the form that "rude progress" had taken in the case of this "bit of old England."

For the Manor, grotesque truth it seemed to him now, was Amabel's! Amabel, who had scarcely ever thought of it as a part of her life, who had been born in a London house, educated at a girls' boarding school, had her holidays in Switzerland or on the Riviera, and grown up in hotels. To this modern product the ownership of the old house had fallen, because her father had been the eldest son, his brothers or other male heirs had been killed in the war, and Miss Grace was only a sister of theirs—not a descendant! How odd that was. Yet Grace Tymperly had been born in the Manor, brought up in it, lived (with her two brothers and two sisters) through all the intensely personal years of childhood, and made it her home for quite thirty odd, or possibly forty, years. Yet, though every stick and stone of it was home to Miss Grace, it was not hers, but her niece's! It had never been hers. She had lived there to see all the faces she had grown up with leave it one by one. Her sisters married, her brothers gone into the world, her parents dead; finally she had lived there alone for some years awaiting the return of her long-widowed American sister-in-law, and, at last, had come her niece, Amabel—an orphan now—to claim it all, literally speaking, though ostensibly to live under Miss Tymperly's chaperonage.

And after Amabel had come he—Victor! Heir to no inconsiderable fortune himself, seeking to accommodate a fixed desire of his father's and a lazy inclination of his own in one and the same act.

He had first met Amabel the previous summer: when, with his father, he had been visiting Europe, though not England. And Amabel had been spending one of many summers passed in the same way—namely, entering the interminable tennis tournaments of the fashionable resorts of the South. National relationship with Amabel's mother had soon brought them together, and Victor's ability to partner her at tennis had founded a friendship that was to last beyond the casual hotel acquaintanceship. Though the Vallances were "seeing" Europe as well as visiting its social centres, they had contrived to link up their schedule of journeys with the Tymperlys' sufficiently frequently to allow of many perspiring sets of tennis on many grilling en-tout-cas courts, and had ended them only with a

promise of more to follow. Then had come Amabel's letter, to Philadelphia, telling them of her mother's sudden death, and of her own intention of settling in England at any rate for the time being, "And of course, when you come to Europe next year, as you *promised*, you must come to England and see me."

Mr. Vallance had voted for the visit at once. He had always liked Amabel and he was distinctly attracted by the idea of visiting her in her own ancestral mansion. To see England from the inside, as it were, in this way, would make such a visit well worth while even if weren't for the allurements of the young lady herself. Victor thought so too. But, except as far as looking forward to playing in as many tennis tournaments with Amabel as might present themselves went, he could not have said that he expected any very lively outcome of the visit. He didn't hide from himself that he saw what was in his father's mind, for he was of a disposition that never blinked at facts; but, on the other hand, neither did he pretend to his parent that he intended to move one step on the desired way without a sufficient personal inclination supervening. He admitted, when taxed with it, that what was wrong with himself was a general lack of that inclination. He had never been "in love." To his father this was almost shocking. Victor said he was sorry about it, but he found it difficult to be ashamed of himself on that account. Now Amabel had probably been "over-head-and-ears" many times, she was that sort. Nothing if not an enthusiast, if she were going to allow herself to sink into that delectable state over him he could scarcely doubt her power of rebounding out of it again should he disappoint her. And so, in this state of vague indeterminateness about the result of so doing, Victor had allowed his father to pilot him on a motor tour of rural England which took in, before many days had passed, the little country town of Rushingham.

They had, of course, warned Amabel by post of their impending arrival, but their meeting with her, and her aunt, in the quiet shopping thoroughfare had been accidental that afternoon. Indeed it had occurred not half an hour after the Vallances' own arrival. They had done no more than book their rooms at the hotel, garage their car and consume a cigarette a-piece, when Mr. Vallance had said: "Do believe that's Miss Amabel herself, driving that cunning little car over yonder!"

"Let's go out and see," suggested Victor, and taking their hats they had stepped out into the road just as Amabel had finished depositing her aunt at a shop on the other side. She looked up, and saw them at once; and there had been no doubt whatever about Amabel's greeting of Victor. Mr. Vallance had said so afterwards; and Victor himself was a young man of quite as acute perceptions as his father. He had contented himself with smiling, in his usual slow fashion ("Just," thought Amabel, "like his tennis, as if it was all too much trouble!"), at Amabel. And Amabel, in making this swift reflection, did not however convey any disagreeable impression to herself. She was, on the contrary, quite delighted by the little recognition that it gave her of Victor as he used to be.

The way he had lounged on to the courts at Cannes or Nice, looking as if, had his tennis racket been one ounce heavier, he could not have supported the weight, and then had played as hard a game as any man there, had always enchanted her; and above all she had enjoyed the sensation that it was she who conjured him to the exertion. That he liked the game, and, therefore, being good-natured, played it for so simple a reason with her, was an explanation not of the type to appeal to Amabel. She was too young, probably, for it possibly to do so, certainly she was too egotistical. Victor, who, as his father had often said, was born "bone-idle," had found in Amabel an energy that had impelled his reluctant admiration. She had roused him into keeping pace with her, he wished by every attention to concede her that . . .

In the meantime he had to be introduced to her aunt. . . . This Miss Tymperly, who had always been in the background, the relic of the old days, who still kept the form and rule as of old, at Amabel's inherited country seat.

Miss Tymperly had been standing on the opposite pavement when he had first seen her, and Victor and his father had crossed the road in order to be introduced to her. She was neither tall nor short, neither spare nor plump, her dress was not smart, nor was it shabby, she was neither young nor old. Even her features were not very marked. Only one thing about her was marked, that hard-to-use word—her "gentility."

Victor, on his four-mile walk in moonlight that night, was amusedly conscious of the fact that, from that moment, Miss Tymperly had practically not left his thoughts. It was as a specimen, he thought to himself, that he most regarded her. He saw in her the last of a species. He felt like a bug-hunter watching, with a certain rapture, the fluttering of a nearly extinct butterfly he had captured. Of course he had not been quite as conscious of all this on the moment of introduction. He had engaged in the usual bantering exchange with Amabel, the sort of thing that he rather enjoyed doing a bit better than others; while Miss Tymperly had talked to his father, frankly ignoring what she couldn't keep up with. And then Amabel had said that if they were really on tour to see a bit of old England, Rushingham, and more especially Rushingham Manor, was simply "it."

"You must come out to lunch to-morrow, mustn't they, Aunt Grace? Our old Manor House is just—just a. . . ."

"Fossil?" suggested Victor.

He had looked for Miss Tymperly's flush, as if he had purposely said the word to try her. But what (as he now remembered it) a pale suffusion it had been to call by such a word! A "flush" would suggest a shade of red, or at least pink. Miss Tymperly's ivory skin had but changed enough to show him that it had changed a shade, and no more. But he had felt his own colour deepen with hers.

Thereafter she had never left his thoughts. The fact that he had nearly blushed was enough to make him remember her, by itself; it was an

unusual enough happening ; but the genesis of it was more remarkable still. He had felt that warmth rise in him because it had risen in her. He had wanted her to feel some resentment at the remark. He had hoped that she would hate her old fossil to be called a fossil. He had, without the slightest previous premonition of it, suddenly felt that Miss Grace Tymperly in her old Manor House was a beautiful thing—possibly more beautiful than Amabel in her smart little car, there, in the road.

But as he walked back the four miles to their inn at Rushingham, Victor saw how absurd it was even to make such a comparison. He might as well ask himself which was the most admirable—a carriage and pair, or a Rolls Royce. One fitted into its time, the other into its. He got on very well with Amabel in the places in which they met each other. He had thought of her a lot on the way to England. But here and now, he admitted to himself, he didn't feel the least desire to think of her. His imagination was so awakened by the sight of Miss Tymperly that it rejected any other occupation than the one he had just indulged to the extent of an eight-mile walk after dinner ! This, indeed, soon became the oddest fact of all to Victor ; for his feet were distinctly tiring. In spite of the elation which had carried him out, and the more than complete gratification it had received, he found that a " bone-idle " young man, of expensive habits, has to pay for indulging in romantic quests of this sort. Still, he had purposely left the car in the garage and gone on foot. He had wanted his escapade to be secret ; but still more he had wanted to be able to savour it slowly. How could he have got all he had out of it if he had rushed out to the Manor in ten minutes, foot, hand and eye occupied with driving, had his peep round, and rushed back ? The thing would have been a farce, whereas his journey now was acquiring the air of a consecrated pilgrimage. He liked this idea of it. He fed his flagging energy with the enjoyment he received from this novel picture of himself. To have had his imagination so stirred was as good as having achieved the exciting feat of knowing what it must be like to be another person. He felt he had lived someone else's life for a few hours—a thrilling experience to have had. But what of Miss Tymperly ? What of the frail agent that had galvanised him sufficiently to work this miracle ? There must be something (more than all he had so far perceived) about her to have done this. More, he meant, in her, individually, as apart from the " specimen " that he beheld in her. He wondered. He was not sure that he wanted to have to acknowledge her individuality. He preferred, at present, to offer the incense of his aching limbs to a general picture she had presented to his imagination. A picture of what the product of the life he conceived her to have led must be like. Anyone would do to fill it. The frame was the thing ; the bulwark that had been so built up of protection, of shelter, of seclusion and contentment surrounding her. The product of it all thus became of value only as she was able to enlighten him about the preparation of the ground that had produced her. Paradoxical again ! If the setting did not produce anything individually desirable, wherefore this

interest in the process? Victor thus came to the conclusion that Miss Grace Tymperly must be worth the being produced, or his interest in the state of society that had produced her must evaporate. Still his interest was in the main impersonal, in that she was like a scene viewed through a telescope; but, he immediately saw, in the same way the scene was more personal too! He alone saw it. It met his eye, only, through the telescope. It scarcely existed but for him! This was an exquisite sensation. Refined, gentle, aloof Grace Tymperly existed, in the way he was now looking at her, for his eye alone. His purely private pleasure. . . . He dropped the line of thought, feeling it was a discourtesy. But the poignancy of it remained in him. He thought of her now as he might have thought of some delicate piece of porcelain, too fragile to be touched by him.

The cooling effect of a night's sleep naturally found Victor waking to a slightly less exalted frame of mind. He was impelled to twist his face into a sardonic grin before he could brave it in the looking glass,

"I guess I'm a blithering fool!" he remarked.

But he kept his adventure a secret all the same. His natural impulse was always to account for his actions, being sociable and utterly indifferent to criticism. But a stronger impulse now bidding him to keep silent, he immediately yielded to it. He had always "taken himself," with a sort of philosophic resignation, for "what he was," a trait in his offspring that had puzzled and baffled poor Mr. Vallance considerably; who, like most self-made men, had a law of self-government that was like a complete suit of clothes. Victor had never dressed his interior with any intent, from a child he had been curiously incapable of doing so. But he had never had any illusions about himself either. Ambitions he had none. He owned he appreciated the money his father doled out to him, but he as frankly owned that he could have lived as happily with none of it. He was not more moved by personal discomfort than he was by comfort. He would have existed as phlegmatically as a tramp as he now existed as an exotic.

In the week that followed, Victor and his father were daily visitors at Rushingham Manor. Amabel would have them and Miss Tymperly seemed resigned, if not too pleased. Victor's opinion of Miss Grace's attitude towards himself was in constant flux. Sometimes he thought she despised him beyond expression; sometimes he felt she really saw something in him to favour. This was when he said things, as he occasionally did, the point of which escaped Amabel. Then he usually found that if his eye sought Miss Grace's their glance would meet, and he'd enjoy again that rare colour of hers. He found himself beginning to do this on purpose; just to get the exquisite pleasure that her flushing gave him. At such a moment her face would lose its years and he would see, for just a few seconds, the beautiful young girl that had been.

"If only, now, I were father, and he were me," Victor reflected with a

wry smile, "He dotes on Amabel, that's easy to see; and I, if I were his age, might stand a chance. . . ."

There was no need to frame the rest of the sentence even in his mind. He knew that was hopeless. And he disliked himself if he even thought a thing that Miss Grace would conceivably be pained by. As to his character, which he couldn't help, he was sorry if she despised him; but as to his thoughts, which he could help, he was determined not to wound her. And that brought him to the subject of her niece. He thought she would like him to have made much faster progress there. No doubt his money, etc., etc.. . . Well, why shouldn't Miss Grace wish Amabel to share his money? If Amabel liked *him* she could reap the benefit of her bad taste by enjoying his money with him. Why not? Money was worth a lot in the considerations of people nurtured in the surroundings of the Tymperlys and their class. To Victor it was worth much less. He could knock about without it very easily; a Tymperly could not . . . in Miss Grace's view. Probably Amabel's view on this head was more like his own. She was not a mercenary girl. Far from anything like that; she was a "topper." He had always thought so. He still did. But did he ever, or rather, *could* he ever, think of her in the light of loving her? His heart had taken the wrong turning. And now, how could he please Miss Tymperly best? How could he act in the way in which she obviously wanted him to act?

His affairs took a more progressive turn that afternoon. He was sitting beside Amabel, in her two-seater, coming home from a tennis party in the neighbourhood, to which she had taken him on the strength of his proficiency in the game. They had had a successful partnership, and were in the best of spirits till the Manor was reached.

"Come in," said Amabel.

Victor shook his head.

"You promised you'd drive me home," he reminded her with a smile.

"Of course. So I will. But come in first, and have a cocktail."

"No, really."

"You think Aunt Grace doesn't like me ordering cocktails. That's why you won't come."

He smiled again. "You've hit it."

"But why," she argued heatedly, "should you care, if I don't?"

Victor found he couldn't answer that.

He asked, "Why do you do it?"

This was taking the offensive himself. She enquired the meaning for the move.

"I often had cocktails when I lived with my mother. I shall have them now when I like. I'm my own mistress really. What business has Aunt Grace to dictate to me?" grumbled Amabel in reply.

"She's been mistress here for years."

"And she thinks she still is. But she's not, really."

"She is while you're—" he had been going to say "still so young," he changed it deliberately to—"still unmarried," watching her face.

Of course she coloured up ; he felt a shock of compunction for the depth of the colour he had raised. He said, " Why don't you marry someone who'd take you away from here ? Then Miss Grace need never be disturbed."

Amabel frowned and bit at her lip. " Why should I leave her here ? It's mine." She laughed. " I'm going up to town to-morrow ; Aunt Grace thinks it's to see the dentist, so it is, but I mean to have a bit of sport too. I shall ring up a friend of mine directly I get up and we'll go to a dance and tea somewhere. What a relief from this place ! "

" Well," said Victor, thoughtfully, " It's no business of mine, but I would like to know who your friend is ? "

" As you say," she responded lightly, " it's no business of yours, so why should I answer ? "

" That's enough to tell me he's a man, anyway."

" Brains ! " she laughed.

" Will he come and live here with you, then ?—or take you somewhere of his own ? "

" His own ! poor boy !—Gracious, he hasn't a bean of his own."

" Amabel," said he, with a sudden new energy in his seriousness, " you've got to marry a man with something of his own. Quite apart from evening things up—the only way to make a happy marriage, as I believe—you've got to think of Miss Grace. She'd never be happy anywhere but here, you'd be happy enough in lots of places. You can't turn her out ! "

Amabel looked around and then down ; she fidgeted ; she bit her lips again.

" I don't like conditions : I think they're mean," she grumbled, " A man shouldn't want to make any with me."

" I said that those were the conditions you ought to make with him," Victor corrected her.

" Well, I'll think of your advice to-morrow," she retorted, half-amiably and half-defiantly as she pulled up outside his hotel.

Victor dismounted, and stood for a moment watching her reversing and turning. Then she waved, " Cheerio ! "

" Bye-bye," said Victor, laughingly, " Give my love to the dentist."

But after a week spent in dallying thus at Rushingham Mr. Vallance could not longer restrain his anxiety to give Victor a piece of his mind. Though he chafed at himself for giving it, knowing how often this boomerang had recoiled, his patience gave out.

" Look here, Victor," he began, the next morning, " What's the game ? " He paused in trepidation. . . .

Victor, who had been reading the *Times*, had dropped it with a politeness that boded failure. He now sat as still as if his portrait were being taken.

" Why are you wasting our time hanging about in this blessed hotel lounge, I'd like to know ? I've told you I'm pressed for time. I've got to

get through a whole bunch of correspondence this morning. I can't stay here much longer—why don't you go up to the Manor? You'll get along faster, or you ought to, without me."

Victor got up. After taking two or three strides in the room, he turned, and looked at his father's bent head. His glance was a queer mixture.

"I'll go now, if you like."

"If I like!"

"And make my offer to Miss Tymperly?"

"*'Miss Tymperly'*? What do you mean? Have you two quarrelled?"

"No. Good God! No."

"Do you want to marry her? Are you in love with her?"

"I want to marry her very much. I am very much in love with her."

"Then why not ask her? She'll have you."

Victor stood for a second, his back to the room, facing the window that looked out on the little street. He fiddled with the blind cord as he watched the old Ford delivery van, driven by the Rushingham baker, back slowly out of a side turning. He leaned forward to watch it out of sight.

"Then I'll ask her," he concluded.

As his balloon tyres crunched to a standstill on the gravel in front of the house, Victor saw Miss Tymperly come out of the side garden-door and go on to the lawn. She was seated before she noticed his quiet steps, but she was so used to his sudden appearances this week that she only smiled, without rising, and called out a cheerful "Good morning."

"But," she continued, as Victor came to her side, "You know Amabel isn't here this morning. She went to London by the 10.40, to see the dentist. Didn't she tell you?"

Victor hesitated. He hated lying. He had never consciously lied in his life, he never saw the necessity. So, with a smile, he employed an Americanism which conveyed a quite different effect in English.

"Why, I believe she did, Miss Tymperly."

This satisfied Miss Grace, and saved his conscience. Then he sat down on the grass beside her chair.

"Get yourself one, won't you?" Miss Grace suggested.

Victor said no. The grass was dry, and, anyway, he hadn't come for long. He was engaged in taking in a picture that was to last him for the rest of his life.

There was the house, in the background, then the terrace, and smooth lawn, and close to them the large lime under whose shade they sat. In the foreground was Miss Tymperly. She was dressed in a light gown, and wore a "garden" type of hat. Her long, soft, white hands held her work; her head was bent to it, or to him, as occasion required. The sun dappled through the leaves, and the warm breeze blew gently over her, ruffling odd ends of her sewing—otherwise all was peacefully still. He sighed a little: it would soon be over. *Punch* was lying on the ground near her. To avoid too much precipitation, Victor picked it up and turned over the pages before he spoke. His hands were lean and brown, interesting hands,

Miss Tymperly thought; they trembled a trifle, and she looked from them to his face. It was an interesting profile, too, she thought, and his colour—brownish, like his hands, as if his face had been all cut out of one smooth piece of paper—seemed less swarthy than usual. His lips had a white tinge. She wondered what he had remained for, if he had nothing to say.

Victor laid down the paper.

"I suppose, when Amabel marries, you'll leave here," he said.

He had not wanted to make her change colour, at least this time. He felt he was just being clumsy; he didn't care even to look up for the effect; but he was too urgently pressed to wait any longer. Suspense was becoming a torture.

"She won't suit the place like you do," he continued, pursuing his way.

Her maintained silence was in itself a rebuke.

"I'd like to see you always living here, you know. To feel that you'd never be moved, or want to move."

"Oh," Miss Tymperly interrupted him with a gesture, "I've always known I'd leave this place some day. There's nothing in *that*. I shall enjoy travelling, I'm looking forward to it."

"But," he went on with it doggedly now, "if Amabel married a man who made a condition with her that you'd stay here—as if you owned the place, I mean—for always, for the rest of your life—would you stay?"

Grace Tymperly looked at him, neither eyes nor voice wavered when she spoke: "Not even then," she said quietly.

"You'd prefer to travel about, and leave everything here?"

He shook his head at that. "You'd be too proud, you mean, to accept their generosity?"

"I wouldn't put it that way," she said kindly.

"But still, you'd be firm?"

"Yes, I'd be firm."

"Then—then, if he married her" (he spoke definitely, stressing the word "if") he wouldn't be gaining what—the thing that—he most wanted."

"Do you mean," said Miss Tymperly in a colder voice, "that he wouldn't be marrying my niece for her own sake?"

"He would have been marrying her for the sake of an idea."

"In order to give this house to some one whom he could have no reason for so obliging."

"He'd have the best of all reasons," Victor replied, in a low voice.

"I don't understand."

"Don't you?"

"He could have no reason that would justify his doing such an injury to a girl as to marry her without loving her."

Victor dragged up a piece of grass, and dissected it with his fingers.

"He'd rather marry the woman he loved, of course."

Miss Tymperly had let her work fall, when she made her last remark, as if she had been preparing to follow it up: now she looked silently at Victor. He let the grass slip away as he met her eyes with his.

"But still, I wouldn't go on living here," she said slowly, with even measure.

"No."

"Then what would he do?"

"He'd go anywhere on earth with you."

One of her white hands went up to be brushed across her forehead. Then it fell, and lay motionless in her lap. His eyes followed it, but he only waited, with a patient expression, as if for the foreseeable end.

It came quite mercifully soon. "I'm afraid I couldn't have him, Victor."

"Not," he pleaded his cause a little, "if you thought about it for a long time?—He'd wait, Miss Tymperly. He'd wait for ever, if only you gave him some hope."

Miss Tymperly gently raised her sewing. "No. Thank you, Victor. I'd give him no hope. Indeed I couldn't."

After a few seconds' silence Victor pulled himself up from the grass.

"I was afraid you couldn't. I knew it would be so. Will you tell Amabel that we had to leave—make some excuse? I'll write to her to-night from town."

"You'd have asked Amabel to be your wife," said Miss Tymperly, in a gentler voice, "if I'd accepted your first proposition?"

"In that case you would never have heard my second," he replied, "I'm glad you've heard it, though. I'd rather you knew. Good-bye, Miss Tymperly."

"Good-bye."

LAST ESSAYS

By C. E. MONTAGUE

V.—The Last Question of All.

(1)

ALL lines of thought about literature lead to one ultimate question. It lies at the end of more roads than Rome ever did. Why are we moved so strongly and so strangely as we are by certain simple groupings of a few ordinary words?

Bacon says that the nature of things is best seen in the smallest possible quantities of them. Take, then, some unit or atom of beautiful writing—a line of verse or a sentence of prose that has stirred you uncommonly. It may be Falstaff's "we have heard the chimes at midnight." Or

the tide of pomp
That beats upon the high shore of this world.

Or "visited all night by troops of stars" in Wordsworth's poem on Mont Blanc. How comes it that these special sequences of quite common words can take hold of you with a high hand, filling your mind and thrilling it with a poignant ecstasy, a delicious disquiet, akin to the restlessness and the raptures of lovers? When I was an idle boy going to school and discovered the lines, out of Scott,

Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow,

they made me so drunk with delight that I had to walk up and down empty compartments of trains, saying them over and over again, as incapable as a blue-bottle either of sitting quiet or of ceasing to hum. The adult Stevenson would seem to have been bitten by much the same gadfly when first he read certain verses of Meredith's *Love in the Valley*:

Lovely are the curves of the white owl sweeping
Wavy in the dusk lit by one large star.

He told Mr. Yeats how he went about whooping the heavenly stuff to the Dryads of the Riviera, "waking with it all the echoes of the hills about Hyères." Everybody must know the sensation. But how to account for it?

(2)

Of course you can easily go a small part of the way towards a full explanation. In the Meredith lines, for example, certain contributory lures and graces are obvious—the engaging "Sing a song 'o sixpence" melody, the play that is made with a few picked consonants, winged and liquidly gliding, and the winning way the second line is retarded at its close by the three stressed monosyllables, like a well-mannered horse pulled up by a

well-mannered rider. The Scott passage, too, has its taking devices of craftsmanship. There is the deftly managed consonantal chord of *bdf* pervading it, to its advantage. There is the drum-like beat of its main vowels, and the reedy hiss of the successive sibilants to help evoke the picture in the two last lines.

Such devices are not to be sniffed at. They help. They are like jewels and lace skilfully worn by a beautiful woman. But these are not the intrinsic and ultimate beauty of their wearer. The Venus of Melos had none; and some of the most lovely sentences ever written are almost as bare of any applied ornament, anything we can detach and define. The critical analyst has to throw up his hands, almost at once, when he tries to precipitate with his acids the charm of

Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair;
Dust hath closed Helen's eye,

or of

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies.

The context, of course, counts for something: every gem is the better for a fine setting. But no gem of the first water is made by its setting. These small splinters of perfection in the art of letters would still bewitch us if they had no context at all. As if to prove as much, Shakespeare struck off one of them:

Child Roland to the dark tower came,

and left it contextless, to haunt the minds of poets like one of the isolated granules of beauty surviving from the Greek Anthology. For it, too, has the essential gem-like quality—a kind of dazzling unreason, as it may seem at first sight—a power of taking you captive without giving you any materials for a presentable explanation of your surrender.

(3)

If we cannot say why we capitulate thus, we may at least try to fix and describe the sensations that visit us while the charm is at work.

For one thing, we are deeply excited. We are shaken or lifted out of our ordinary state of consciousness. Many of our faculties are, for the moment, enhanced. We feel keener perceptions coming into action within us. We are given the use of more than our normal stock of penetrative sympathy: we feel that we can enter into people's feelings, and understand the quality of their lives better than ever before.

Another effect of the drug is that, while it is acting strongly, the whole adventure of mankind upon the earth gains, in our sight, a new momentousness, precariousness and beauty. The new and higher scale of power in ourselves seems to be challenged by an equal increase in the size of the objects on which it is exercised. Living becomes a grander affair than we had ever thought.

A third effect on the mind is a powerful sense—authentic or illusory—

of being in the presence of extraordinary possibilities. You feel as if new doors of understanding and delight were beginning to open around you. Some sort of mysterious liberation or empowerment seems to be approaching. You are assured, in an unaccountable way, that wonderful enlightenments, still unreceived, are on their way to you, like new stars that are nearing the point in space at which they will come within the range of our sight.

These sensations may not be defined or measured as closely as doctors measure a patient's temperature, his pulse and his blood pressure. And yet they are worth describing, if only because you will find that you are also describing something else by the way. The nearer you get to saying just what you feel, when under the spell of great writing, the nearer you are, too, to defining the state of mind and heart in which great things are written.

(4)

That state is not normal. It is not the state of each particular writer "at par". To do great things he has to be far above himself, however high his normal level of thought and feeling may be. Not of Oliver Goldsmith alone among writers might it be said that he "wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll." Nor need we suppose that Goldsmith himself did any injustice to the normal level of his mind when he failed to shine at the club in conversation with Reynolds and Burke. More probably the angelic music and wit of his best prose came to the birth when he was worked up to an extraordinary state of mental fertility and felicity. More often than not the great writer or other great artist, when seen and heard in the flesh, is a disappointing figure to innocent persons who seek his acquaintance under the old illusion that the living, breathing man must be greater than his work. Seek not to "see Shelley plain." He may be plain indeed. Tennyson could be a boor, and the inexpressive grunts of Turner are notorious.

And yet this state of pregnant excitement is not a mystery wholly concealed from ordinary people or absolutely excluded from their experience. Almost everyone must at some time or other have found how it feels to be utterly absorbed in the writing of a private letter—how you lose count of time and have no sense of disagreeable effort; how words of a strange rightness come easily into your head and apt quotations drift into your reach; how some scene that you describe becomes more and more amusing to yourself, in recollection, while you describe it: and how at the end you are rather tired and rather happy, and read the thing through and say to yourself that you would never have thought you could do it so well.

That common experience is not different in kind, but only in the degree of its intensity, from an onset of creative passion in a great imaginative artist. Where such an artist differs most widely from the common run of men and women is in his power of inducing that exceptional condition in himself and of working it up to a pitch that, for the rest of us, is quite unattainable. For most of his time he may seem, and indeed he may be, quite

a dull man, a humourless egoist or a trumpeting bore. He may cut no figure at all among the wits and sages of a country house or a bar parlour. But, with a pen in his hand, he can "have a devil" at will, or at least some of the many times he wills it. In a way he is like a car with a quite commonplace basic speed but a remarkable power of acceleration. And in a way he is like those gifted fighting men in whom the manual exercise of combat seems to light a wonderful fire in the blood. To them, battle brings ecstasy. They are ravished above pain and fear; and in that temporary trance of exemption from common checks upon fury, and of immunity from common maladies of the will, they can delightedly do and endure things preposterous or impossible in the eyes of cool common sense.

(5)

It is seldom that a great artist has anything new to say about life. The things that touch or amuse him are usually those by which the greatest number of ordinary people were touched and amused before him. The minds of Virgil and Sophocles, Shakespeare and Dante and Goethe seem in the main to have brooded over just those staple themes which elicit less memorable expressions of melancholy from Smith, Brown and Jones—lost youth and severed friends and disappointed love and the consignment of beauty to dust and the frustration of hopes that once seemed too powerful ever to fail. If a great tragic writer were to arise in England to-day, it is likely that his musings on the perishable splendour of man's fate and the irreparableness of action would take the form most widely prevalent among the more sensitive portion of his countrymen—perhaps an afternoon sense of sad sunshine and overblown flowers, the outlived expectations of a melting empire on an earth that is rubbing its own features down, and that moves always more and more slowly round a sun that is losing its heat. The theme would be commonplace. But when the great tragic writer had brooded upon it, then it would have gained the charm of a new and extraordinary intensity.

A great and available reserve of sheer intensity—intensity of perception and of emotion—it is in his possession of this that a great artist differs most deeply from his fellows. In no vague or rhetorical sense of the words, he sees and hears more intensely. Science tells us that what we call a sight or a sound is a product of two distinct forces. As waves break upon a sea-coast, certain undulatory movements that throb through the air break upon delicate shores in a man's eyes or ears. From the beach, so to speak, word is sent thereupon by a nerve to a special bureau of the brain; and, with this material in hand, the brain builds up for itself the song of a lark or the colour and form of a rose in a world that, apart from this act of the brain, is utterly silent and dark. So there is no one rose or lark, perceived identically by us all. There are as many different roses or larks as there are different brains to make them. The flower or bird of the great artist's make, when his brain is working at its best, is made with an extraordinary concentration of care and delight. It is like a lover's handiwork, done for the beloved, not a journeyman's.

This intense constructiveness of vision goes beyond objects of physical sight. From the construction of single physical things, at the instance of the eye or on the prompting of the ear, it can pass easily on to the vivid framing of their implications : in Blake's much quoted words it can see the world in a grain of sand, and Heaven in a wild flower. It can go further and build up, always with a passionate relish for what it is producing, a kind of semi-sensuous image of something abstract and vague—the *lacrimae rerum* of Virgil, life's falling tears, or the Wordsworthian sense of the world's loss of transfiguration as we grow up. But, however sombre the theme, it brings to the artist no grief in the usual sense of the word. For grief disables, and this kind of vision empowers. It has been said that God is a person who feels all the pain there is in the world without being disabled by it at all. And that much of divineness there is in a great artist. When the excitement of writing *Macbeth* had worked Shakespeare up to the full height and heat of his powers, he saw the frustratory aspect of most people's lives with such an intensity of clearness that, if he had not been an artist at work, he might well have thrown everything up and sat down in despair. But the heat of artistic emotion is always convertible into force of the constructive order. So the climax of intensity in this tragic vision brought no incoherent cry of pity or prostration, but the extreme opposite, the passionately perfected design of one of the most famous of the writer's "purple patches":

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
 To the last syllable of recorded time,
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
 The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle !
 Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
 And then is heard no more : it is a tale
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
 Signifying nothing.

(6)

To this super-normal level of impassioned constructiveness a writer, or any other artist, mounts by an ascending scale of interaction between the technical exercise of his craft—the act of word-assorting and writing, of laying on paint or of modelling clay, and the imaginative effort of penetrating to the essence, the inmost and uttermost significance, of the "subject" before him. You may see a painter start a portrait almost apathetically. He will handle his paint in a commonplace way. He will seem to see no more than you or I can see at a glance in the personality of his sitter. But soon the feel of the paint on the canvas begins to enliven his mind ; and the mind thus quickened conceives a livelier curiosity about the creature before him. And then the mind that is piqued with this curiosity transmits in turn a share of its new animation to the working hand, firing it to

do feats of swift sureness, summary selection and eloquent brilliancy beyond its ordinary powers. And so this process of mutual stimulation continues till both the faculties engaged in it are forced up far above their natural human commonness. They rise to a point at which the artist is sometimes said, in the old phrase, to be "inspired."

The phrase may be uncritical. And yet it has a measure of aptness. It does at least convey that a painter or a writer has attained a kind of self-attesting note of authority for which we cannot easily account. His lips may not be touched, but he speaks as if they were. And we listen as if they were, too. Out of some experience not given to ourselves, and not to be easily explained to us, he has emerged with an utterance which we cannot prove to be authentic but which still imposes itself irresistibly upon our belief and our admiration. Somehow it carries about it an indefinable certificate that it is no skimble-skamble stuff, with nothing behind its façade. There shines through it still the intensity of vision and the immense sincerity of the emotion in which it had its origin.

Think how often you have seen some slippery politician put his hand upon his heart and vow that it is only "for the cause" that he has executed this little manoeuvre or that. Nobody minds him. And yet when Othello says, "It is the cause, my soul, it is the cause," you do not merely believe it. You probably feel that never till now have you fully known how appallingly sincere a man may be in trying to remain judicial under a tempest of pain. It is no rare experience, again, to hear someone say that he is dying, and to know that it is true. In such a case you are probably touched by the words, but unless the dying man be a dear friend you will scarcely feel any such surge of emotion as shakes you when Antony says "I am dying, Egypt, dying." For here you have not merely truth, but truth raised to higher powers of itself; not the simple overshadowing of life by death, but the immensity of tragic import that this obscuration may have for a mind enormously more susceptible to tragic impressions than your own.

(7)

There still remains that ultimate question. In virtue of what do these intrinsically plain arrangements of quite common words carry the germs of a rare and noble fever of the soul from a person long dead to persons living in another age and, perhaps, at the other end of the world? Is it that, even when masked in print, the written word retains the power of the spoken voice to give a subtle guarantee of its own authenticity, if authentic it be? So that in print, as well as in speech, the same words may stir us deeply in one case, and leave us quite cold in another? Does some intimation reach us that one man has written them with authority, and another only as the Scribes? If so, is the intimation "internal", as we say of literary evidence? Can it be traced in some more elusive quality in the actual words than any that literary criticism has yet marked down? In that passage quoted already:

Brightness falls from the air ;
Queens have died young and fair ;
Dust hath closed Helen's eye,

is there some delicately expressive quality of rhythm which carries with it the same overpowering effect of momentousness that a spoken assurance sometimes derives, in part, from the modulation of the living voice ? Or can criticism only say that, by some means which are out of its ken, these heavenly lines do somehow convey a state of passionately poignant exaltation from the writer's mind to the fit reader's—and leave us to wonder whether the apparently countless sets of possibly communicative “ waves,” suspected but not yet listed, that are said to ripple endlessly about the world, may include a set that enables the passionate stir of one mind to impinge directly on some specially sensitised tissue in other brains, with the aid of no more apparatus than certain verbal memoranda playing a quite subsidiary part in the business ?

“ What know I ? ” From this cascade of tough questions I take refuge, for my own part, in the safe old question of Montaigne.

AN APPEAL TO SIGNOR MUSSOLINI*

YOUR EXCELLENCY,—The wise words in which, last October, you proclaimed judgment on art as independent of judgment on politics, did not surprise the editors of these pages, because they knew that the love of truth was stronger in you than any other sentiment. This truth, though for a time veiled, has both age and solidity. But we are none the less grateful to you. So many, not only among painters and writers, were convinced that the "Membership card gives talent to him who does not possess it"! And there are very many more, who are still firm in the belief that they are not included. Membership cards have registered stamps, talents have none and this is fortunate. In short, we might still find a poet like Burchiello, or a victim of nostalgia like Gozzano, to whom the word "State" would mean no more than a past participle. But to-day, thanks to Fascism, it is hardly probable, though logically still possible.

Fascist art : the more we talk about it, the harder it is to define, for a really Fascist style in art will arise only when Italian culture and consciousness have been remoulded by Fascism. Then the style will appear, not by an act of will, but from habit, from sentiment, from instinct itself. The style called Napoleonic preceded the Empire and outlived it. Buonaparte took it to himself like a uniform, which, with its suggestions of Caesar, would explain at a first glance his imperialistic propositions to the people. But the art and poetry which really expressed that tremendous ambition to impose upon the world, after the madness of revolution, a peace and order on a Roman model (leaving out Rome), and which was represented by that frantic sword-in-the-fist rush across Europe, in order to capture, not so much the enemy as his own ambition, always more distant, more unattainable, was not in the betogaed paintings of David or the mechanical poetry of Delille : it was in the paintings of Delacroix and the poetry of Victor Hugo, twenty or thirty years later. It was David who painted the pictures of the Emperor and the Empire as they wanted to be, but it was Delacroix, imbued with their spirit, who painted them as they really were. These are things that your Excellency knows better than I do. I write them only in order to show that, if an original style cannot be born to-day by the will of the government, at least the buildings erected by the Fascist government in the capital, in the provinces and the colonies, could have some recognizable unity of proportion and of form. In architecture this unity was once called order, and that word is dear to you, in the same way as it is now dear to every good Italian. When we look instead, in the illustrated papers, at the government buildings of recent years, we see edifices and monuments of every style and character, dished-up copies of old models, copies of those Viennese and German buildings which appear

*We reprint this article, by Signor Ugo Ojetti, from *Pegaso*, the new Italian review. It throws light on the Fascist attitude towards the arts.

in every text-book ; and, as an audacious novelty, some of those bare, square, man-inhabited boxes, which our young architects (rather tardy in their imitation of the foreigners) are trying to bring into common use in Italy. I do not deny that this autumn we have seen some quite decently constructed buildings, one at least in Rome and one in Milan. But on the whole it is a Babel. Why does not your Excellency gather round you a small group of capable architects to whom could be entrusted all the projects for the public government edifices ? Let private individuals build according to their ways and whims, but even that is disputable ; it suffices to look at our Riviera, from Bordighera to Spezia, to realise the outcome of that liberty. But that at least the buildings upon which this government has fixed the emblem of the Fascio should be distinguishable even a hundred years hence, is a point which should not need discussing.

In sculpture the task of the government is already more difficult, in painting most difficult. One thing is undeniable ; if your Excellency desired to commemorate on canvas or by fresco one of the memorable scenes of your government, for example, the recent muster of agriculturists in Rome or the initiation of the works for the draining of the Lake of Nemi, where your Excellency was present, there would be nothing for you to do but to call in a photographer. The new painters, snatched, this one from revolution, that one from reaction, another from destruction, and yet another from reconstruction, could not give even a general outline, such as would have been given, let us say, by a Domenico Induno. In France, England, Germany and Russia, painters capable of this work (even though not first-class) exist. With us, amidst the damages wrought by fashions and schools, real painters hardly exist. " Inferior tasks, these," say the younger generation, " merely mechanical." Truly from Giotto to Rafael, from Ambrogio Lorenzetti to Paolo Veronese, from Ghirlandaio to Tiepolo, from Carpaccio to Fattori, all our best artists have also known how to present, in a durable form of art, these illustrated historical chronicles. I say this with hesitation, for so many philosophers and aesthetes, in order to prove their own theories, and painters, in order to justify their own escape from life, have derided and depreciated them.

In any case, when it pleases your Excellency's government to occupy itself with this as well, it will be able to inspire sculptors and painters, by commissioning statues and paintings on prescribed themes and by liberating them from the petty tyrannies which here and there afflict and suffocate them ; and which, even after your speech, answer " Membership card " to those who say " Art." These arts have always flourished in the shade of princes and Condottieri, of oligarchies and of courts, for the nobility and *bourgeoisie* followed the example of their leaders. But on the one side, democracy (with her logical hatred for art, which, even when starving and in extremity, always maintains an indestructible leadership) and on the other side, romanticism (with her detrimental free thought and the fatal progress, as one sees it, of Donatello to Archipenko and the right of every simpleton to say " I see it like this ") have agreed to demolish

in art that solid pyramid of faithful adherents. The ruin is such, that even the Vatican, in spite of a humanist Pope, like the present one, cannot find the right path: as is proved by the monuments which are still erected in St. Peter's. "*Vaticana libas si delectaris aceto*," said Martial, but he was speaking of vines, and I speak of herds. I have left literature to the last, since I now return to my own domain. Here the State can do hardly anything, and it is just here where your discourse of the 10th October is at its most admirable and its most memorable: the thought of a chief who, though he has risen so high, has not lost contact with simple everyday life and who, as a born writer, knows that good writers can be more damaging when against us than useful when with us and who, through history, has seen the misery to which Napoleonic tyranny and Papal censure reduced French and Roman letters, not to mention Austria, which, at least in Milan, was even more cautious than the Papacy.

There is only one thing the State can do; to offer to everybody well organised schools and rich and commodious libraries; to encourage Greek and Latin in the schools, and not to fall into the snare of the "*Scuola Unica*" without any foundation of classic culture or civilization, which is to-day demanded by the French Cartel; and not to initiate schools with professional prejudices, which would be like sowing grain and maize on the frozen ground of January. Even now the best engineers are those who have come out of the classical schools, not those who have come out of the scientific ones. It is classic culture, rather than writers and style, which for centuries has moulded the characters of men all over the civilized world. That is what Giovanni Gentile thought of in the *Reform*, which your Excellency has made your own, which you have adapted better every year to our current life, and in which our regime justly glories.

I must add that our literature is in its early spring. There are more buds and shoots than flowers and fruits, but, for those who can distinguish, there are very promising buds. Also in regard to this, in parenthesis, we have with the aid of a few adherents created a group where our best young writers will be welcomed and honoured, as they deserve, and in good time, before they are disillusioned by neglect and lack of appreciation, before they are forced to fade away through want. We lack to-day a leader in literature whose authority and manner most would obey. Is it good fortune? Is it misfortune? The fact is that he is lacking. Gabriele D'Annunzio is on Olympus or Parnassus, among clouds which to some are hurricanes, to others incense. I myself faithfully burn a little grain of incense to him every day and I am proud of it. Like the Pope of 1870, Benedetto Croce of 1922 has no more temporal power, and he would have been a good father, even if most ferocious with heretics. To be sure, with these literary and artistic controversies, there is a danger, for the space of five minutes, of leading others to believe that a harmless colleague of our own size is a giant and to tire our arms out in beating a rag doll. It remains for us to assault stupidity, facileness, rhetoric or whatever lies anyone chooses to tell us. But this would be an eternal struggle, and it could not be the mark

of an epoch, any more than a struggle against thieves and drunkards could be the emblem of a civilization. Many regret the absence of a leader in literature, even if it should serve no other purpose than as a good example in politics. But it is for the historians to mourn more than the poets. Petrarchisms, Seicentisms, Arcadianisms, classicisms, romanticisms ; all the Carduccians or D'Annunzians, all the futurists or rondistes, all the positivists or Crocians—certainly these periods and fashions have the advantage of making their most obscure adherents appear vital and alive by virtue of their uniform and banner. To-day, instead, we are free to exist as we can and as we wish. It must be very tiring for those historians and panoramic critics, who try to pass all the different periods in review and who find one small, the other tall, one dressed in blood-red, the other in purple, one on horseback with lightning in his hand, the other stretched out on the green, plucking petals from daisies. But one does not write, as far as I know, for the same reasons as one looks out for a post in the ministry of economics and corporations. Let these historical gentlemen wait awhile. They are the servants of time, and if they attempt to rebel against their master, they run the risk of having to start their work ten times over.

In this delicate stage of our literature, your Excellency has proclaimed from above the right of art, of prose, poetry and the theatre to be judged objectively, without having a veto on account of a more or less out-of-date Membership card. Not that writers have not got to be or to feel Italian citizens, or to consider themselves superior to the law ; on the contrary, the greater their influence, the greater their responsibility. But now I am dealing only with their art, and I am defending nothing but their art, and I defend it only when it is art in reality. I repeat to your Excellency our gratitude, and I assert that, if the signs do not lie, the future of our literature will also be worthy of the Italy that you hope for. But we need faith and patience. For in this also the soul of a writer resembles that of a husbandman, in knowing how to wait and prepare the ground, even unto protecting the seeds and shoots of the trees, of which we shall enjoy neither the shade nor the fruits :

*Scilicet omnibus est labor impendendus et omnes
cogendae in sulcum ac multa mercede domandae.*

Your devoted,
UGO OJETTI.

GEORGE DARLEY

By GRAHAM GREENE

A BOOK yet remains to be written on the tragedy of those rare poets who have been ruined by their own lack of conceit. It is a curious psychological fact that men of the highest intellect, with interests almost entirely intellectual, will suffer a sense of inferiority and shame from a purely physical defect, which will sometimes cancel their whole work. There are cases, naturally, where that shame has not been disastrous, but none the less it has been present. Byron was driven by his lame leg to a bitter isolation and to satire; from the calm, but somewhat too facile loveliness of "She walks in beauty like the night" to the tortured medley of buffoonery and grandeur which he called *Don Juan*. Byron's shame, in fact, was our gain. Stevenson, however much he might sound the brazen trumpet of his heroics, was ashamed of his consumptive body. "Shall we never shed blood?" he asked, only half-humorously, and he hoped that in the swords' clash of *Kidnapped*, his readers would forget that one man, by no stretch of imagination, could ever put himself in the round house with Alan Breck. And yet, because he too was forced like Byron, though by more material circumstances, into isolation, we have gained a level, controlled prose as likely to endure as that of Addison, and at least one great novel *Weir of Hermiston*, where Stevenson's long struggle to shackle passion in a delicate case found a beautiful reward.

George Darley's defect compared with that of Byron and that of Stevenson seems small and very ludicrous. He had a stutter, and perhaps its lack of any possibility of a romantic pose made it the harder to bear. He was a poet of infinite potentiality, and he spent his poetic life almost entirely on the writing of pretty songs and unactable plays. Now, although it is only eighty years since his death, his work, and among most even his name, is forgotten. He is to be found occasionally in anthologies—Mr. Bridges included a large number of extracts from his remarkable *Nepenthe* in *The Spirit of Man*—and to the general public he is known, if he is known at all, as the author of a charming song, a favourite of the Victorian young ladies of his time :

I've been roaming ! I've been roaming !
Where the meadow dew is sweet,
And like a queen I'm coming
With its pearls upon my feet.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Abbott's volume* will remind the public of this retiring ghost.

* *The Life and Letters of George Darley, Poet and Critic.* By Claude Colleer Abbott. Oxford University Press. 16s.

Darley was born in 1795 in Dublin of Irish parents, the eldest of a family of four sons and three daughters. His parents went from Ireland to the United States, when he was still a child and left him at Springfield, Co. Dublin, in the care of his grandfather, with whom he remained until he was about ten years of age. The impediment in his speech was already with him and probably already exaggerated in a morbid and nervous mind. But past misery is easily transmuted into happiness, and later, looking back, he was very ready to find in those years, in what is known as the Garden of Ireland, joys which at the time he had not recognized.

When a child [he wrote] I thought myself miserable, but now see that by comparison I was happy, at least all the "sunshine of the breast" I now enjoy seems a reflection of that in the dawn of life. I have been to *la belle France* and to *bella Italia*, yet the brightest sun which ever shone upon me broke over Ballybetagh mountains.

Little of Darley's early youth is known to us. On his parents' return from America he joined them in Dublin, entered Trinity College there in 1815 and graduated in 1820. Science and mathematics had been his studies, and in his studies he had lived. Human intercourse then, as later, was less shut out from him by his stutter than by the morbid introspection into which it plunged him. It made him first shy and then bold with the exaggerated self-importance which is so often to be found in dwarfs. He recoiled and sprang. He was determined in those first days, when nothing had been tried and therefore nothing had yet failed, to make the world take notice of him and forget the stutter. And the world, in the person of passing acquaintances, would never have noticed the stutter without his own self-conscious under-lining. He was beautiful in a delicate, somewhat Shelleian fashion, "tall and slight with the stoop of a student; delicate features slightly aquiline; eyes not large but very earnest, with often a far away expression; hair dark brown and waving." There were times in those days when he completely forgot his impediment in excited conversation.

He had not been pre-eminently successful at Trinity College. Although he had a great talent for mathematics, his stutter had impeded him in at least one examination. No high academical post was open to him, and in any case a career of teaching was impossible. It was therefore with some sense, as well as some courage, that he flung himself in 1822 upon literary London, with his first volume of verse *The Errors of Ecstasie*. He was twenty-seven years old, but the majority of the poems must have been written years before, for they are completely devoid of merit. The lyrics are full of the conceits of roses and bees from which the future poet never freed himself. They are tuneful but seldom musical. The title poem is a long and very wearisome blank verse dialogue between a poet contemplating suicide and the moon. It is of interest for a few clearly autobiographical lines:

Didst thou not barter Science for a song?
Thy gown of learning for a sorry mantle?

and for a very occasional line where Darley is caught in a youthful pride and defiance which he lost too soon :

I would not change the temper of my blood
For that which stagnates in an idiot's veins,
To gain the sad salvation of a fool.

When he wrote that, poor and halting though the blank verse was, there was hope for Darley. Vitality and pride, the two most necessary sources for poetry, were his "and at the rainbow's foot lay surely gold."

Literary London was not unkind to the new poet. A critic wrote of his book that it was

a work as well of intellect as of temperament, although his fancy has been inadequately controlled. . . . His poetry is to be blamed for the wildness of imagination, not the weakness of sensuality

and the next year found him a regular contributor to the *London Magazine*. It was the time of the proprietorship of Taylor and Hessey, when the contributors were invited to meet one another at dinner once a month at the offices of the firm in Waterloo Place. Here he met De Quincey, Procter, Talfound, Clare, Hazlitt, Hood, whose finest poems, the *Ode to Autumn* and the sonnets on *Silence* and *Death* appeared this very year in the magazine, Henry Cary, the translator of Dante, and Lamb. The two latter he was soon able to number among his few friends. There are occasional references to him in Lamb's letters, and he seems to have been a regular visitor at Enfield, sometimes in the company of Cary, sometimes in that of Allan Cunningham.

But the shyness induced by his stutter stood in the way of his friendships. In a volume of tales, *The Labours of Idleness*, which he published in 1826 under the name of Guy Penseval, he gave a clear picture of his own self-consciousness. We can see him at Waterloo Place sitting in the background of the conversation, feeling himself neglected with a growing and unjust resentment, suddenly plunging into the conversation with the same asperity as characterized the dramatic criticism which he was now writing for the *London* under the pseudonym of John Lacy :

I always found myself so embarrassed in the presence of others, and everyone so embarrassed in mine—I was so perpetually infringing the rule of politeness, saying or doing awkward things, telling unpalatable truths, or giving heterodox opinions on matters long since established as proper, agreeable, becoming, and the contrary, by the common creed of the world ; there was so much to offend and so little to conciliate in my manners, arrogant at one time, puling at another ; dull when I should have been entertaining ; loquacious when I should have been silent . . . that I quickly perceived obscurity was the sphere in which Nature had destined me to shine. . . . At first indeed there were several persons who liked, or seemed to like me, from a certain novelty or freshness in my manner, but as soon as that wore off they liked me no longer. I was "an odd being" or "a young man of some genius but very singular" ; something to fill up the gaps of tea-time conversation when the fineness of the evening and the beauty of the prospect had already been discussed by the party.

This feeling of inferiority, the idea that people but "seemed" to like him was no doubt enhanced by the London dinners, where Lamb and Hood set the key to a conversation which chiefly consisted in a quick succession of bad puns. And yet Darley had met with undeserved good fortune. He had established himself in literary London with one book of very mediocre verse and a volume of short stories, interspersed with lyrics. And *Sylvia* was growing in his head, *Sylvia* which was to set him upon the pinnacle of fame. The idea that he was carrying a masterpiece in his mind must have made the alternately shy and aggressive poet very insupportable. Beddoes wrote to Kelsall in 1824, after a visit to Mrs. Shelley's :

Darley is a tallish, slender, pale, light-eyebrowed, gentle-looking bald pate, in a brown suit and with a duodecimo under his arm—stammering to a most provoking degree, so much so as to be almost inconvertible—he is supposed to be writing a comedy or tragedy, or perhaps both in one.

The filibustering medical poet from the sea coast of Bohemia was not likely to find Darley attractive, and in 1826 he wrote to Procter from Hanover a little impatiently: "Is Darley delivered yet? I hope he's not a mountain."

The next year *Sylvia* appeared, a pretty fairy comedy—as Miss Mitford said—"something between *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Faithful Shepherdess*." Miss Mitford was charmed by it. So was the future Mrs. Browning, who found it "a beautiful pastoral." Lamb thought it "a very poetical poem" and was pleased with the stage directions in verse. Beddoes, if he ever read it, remained discreetly silent, as silent as the public. Yet the play is very readable, and at one point shows a little of the swing and power which Darley was later to display in *Nepenthe*. In the penultimate scene, the stage directions, which have been growing looser and looser in texture, suddenly desert the play for a vivid, coloured comparison between Byron and Milton :

One gloomy Thing indeed, who now
Lays in the dust his lordly brow,
Had might, a deep indignant sense,
Proud thoughts, and moving eloquence ;
But oh ! that high poetic strain
Which makes the heart shriek out again
With pleasure half mistook for pain ;
That clayless spirit that doth soar
To some far empyrean shore
Beyond the chartered flight of mind,
Reckless, repressless, unconfined,
Springing from off the roofèd sky
Into unceiled Infinity . . .
That strain, this spirit was not thine.

But the ears of the public were as firmly closed to the occasional beauty as to the rather imitative prettiness of the whole. The mountain had brought forth its mouse.

Darley was not a man with the courage to stand against silence. Attack might have made him aggressive, silence only made him question his own powers, the most fatal act an artist can commit. He published no other poetry for public circulation until 1840, when his long and tedious play *Thomas à Becket*, showing the influence of Sir Henry Taylor, appeared, to be followed the next year by a still duller play, *Ethelstan*. In writing to Procter about the former play, he gave rein to the doubt which had been haunting him :

I am indeed suspicious, not of you but myself ; most sceptical about my right to be called " poet," and therefore it is I desire confirmation of it from others. Why have a score of years not established my title with the world ? Why did not *Sylvia*, with all its faults, ten years since ? It ranked me among the small poets. I had as soon be ranked among the piping bullfinches.

Sylvia's failure drove him back to science. In the next few years he published a series of volumes on elementary mathematics, *A System of Popular Geometry*, *A System of Popular Trigonometry*, *Familiar Astronomy* and *The Geometrical Companion*, several of which became considerably popular. Indeed from this time on he was linked finally with mathematics. Carlyle spoke of him as :

Darley (George) from Dublin, mathematician, considerable actually, and also poet ; an amiable, modest, veracious and intelligent man—much loved here though he stammered dreadfully.

Sir F. H. Doyle wrote of him as " a man of true genius, and not of poetical genius alone, for he distinguished himself also as a mathematician and a man of science," and Allan Cunningham in the *Athenaeum* called him " a true poet and excellent mathematician." Darley himself in a letter to Cary, wrote ;

I did not mean Mathematics inspired poetry but only that the Science was absolutely necessary for such an extravagates as I am. Only for this cooling study I should be out of my reason probably—like poor Lee's hero " knock out all the start " and die like a mad dog foaming.

But the lyrics that Darley was writing, and occasionally publishing in the *London* and the *Athenaeum*, to which he began to contribute a series of letters from abroad on foreign art, and his usual truculent dramatic criticism, show little of the fevered turmoil of mind at which the letter to Cary hints. That turmoil was to burst out once, and once only, unforgettably in *Nepenthe*. Now, as though his grip upon himself grew, as he became more and more conscious of the repressed, thwarted instincts within himself, the best of his lyrics show a calm, though sometimes complaining restraint :

Oh nymph ! release me from this rich attire !
Take off this crown thy artful fingers wove ;
And let the wild-rose linger on the brier
Its last, sweet days, my love !

For me shalt thou, with thy nice-handed care,
Nought but the simplest wreath of myrtle twine,
Such too, high-pouring Hebe's self must wear,
Serving my bower with wine.

When his grip relaxed, it was not yet into ungoverned imagination, but into pretty and cloying fancies, which yet, because he was at his worst still a poet, break into a faint beauty of metaphor, as in the opening to his conventional and uninspired sonnet to Gloriana :

To thee, bright lady ! whom all hearts confess
Their queen, as thou dost highly pace along,
Like the Night's pale and lovely sultaness
Walking the wonder-silent stars among."

But though it was his loneliness which caused his failure, it was loneliness that inspired some of his best lyrics. No one can contend that these short poems approach very close to greatness, but they are at their best extremely charming minor poetry. *The Dove's Loneliness* has mastery of a music and rhythm which seem to lie just outside analysis, and its dying close might have been written by Mr. de la Mare :

Smile thou and say farewell ! The bird of Peace,
Hope, Innocence and Love and Loveliness,
Thy sweet Egeria's bird of birds doth pray
By the name best-belov'd thou'lt wend thy way
In pity of her pain. Though I know well
Thou wouldst not harm me, I must tremble still ;
My heart's the home of fear ; ah ! turn thee then,
And leave me to my loneliness again.

Here are many of Mr. de la Mare's technical artifices, the half rhymes—Peace and Loveliness, well and still—the fondness for the letter "l" in conveying the sense of uncertain and undefined longing, the alliteration of words, as well as letters—Love and Loveliness. Mr. de la Mare has been compared with Keats and Blake and Christina Rossetti. It is strange that no one has noted the affinity with Darley. The resemblance does not lie in one solitary poem, but is continually recurring :

O was it fair ?
Fair, kind or pitiful to one
Quite heart-subdued—all bravery done,
Coyness to deep devotion turned,
Yet pure the flame with which she burned,—
O was it fair that thou shouldst come,
Strong in this weakness, to my home,
And at my most defenceless hour,
Midnight, shouldst steal into my bower,
In thy triumphant beauty more
Fatal that night than e'er before ?

Here is not merely a resemblance to Mr. de la Mare's music, but a spiritual resemblance, if we ignore Darley's more concrete and material plot, to a particular poem, the lovely "I was at peace until you came."

But it is with the extraordinary *Nepenthe* that George Darley will live or die. A few copies of the poem were printed for private circulation in 1835, as Miss Mitford wrote,

with the most imperfect and broken types, upon a coarse, discoloured paper, like that in which a country shopkeeper puts up his tea, with two dusky leaves of a still dingier hue, at least a size too small, for cover, and garnished at top and bottom with a running margin in his own writing.

It was not reprinted until 1897.

Nepenthe is one of the most remarkable poems that the nineteenth century produced. It was no wonder that Miss Mitford before this wild medley of Shelley, Milton and Keats, made a single whole by the feverish personality of Darley himself, wrote that "there is an intoxication about it that turns one's brain." Darley himself in a letter to Chorley gives a much needed explanation of its theme :

to show the folly of discontent with the natural tone of human life. Canto I attempts to paint the ill-effects of over-joy ; Canto II those of excessive melancholy. Part of the latter object remains to be worked out in Canto III, which would likewise show—if I could ever find confidence, and health and leisure to finish it—that contentment with the mingled cup of humanity is the true "*Nepenthe*."

But Darley, perhaps because he never found that *Nepenthe*, left the poem a fragment.

The poem opens with the same speed, the same magical rush of wings, on which it takes its whole course of 1600 odd lines :

Over a bloomier land, untrod
By heavier foot than bird or bee
Lays on the grassy-bosomed sod,
I passed one day in reverie :
High on his unpavilioned throne
The heaven's hot tyrant sat alone,
And like the fabled king of old
Was turning all he touched to gold.

The poem cannot be followed as a detailed plot. It remains in the mind as a succession of vivid images :

Sudden above my head I heard
The cliff-scream of the thunder-bird,
The rushing of his forest wings,
A hurricane when he swoops or springs,
And saw upon the darkening glade
Cloud-broad his sun-eclipsing shade.

of beautiful episodes—the death of the phoenix, with its lovely lyric *O Blest Unfabled Incense Tree*, which has at last begun to find its place in anthologies, and the less known but little less lovely :

O fast her amber blood doth flow
From the heart wounded Incense Tree,
Fast as earth's deep embosomed woe
In silent rivulets to the sea !

Beauty may weep her fair first-born,
Perchance in as resplendent tears,
Such golden dewdrops bow the corn
When the stern sickleman appears.

But oh ! such perfume to a bower
Never allured sweet-seeking bee,
As to sip fast that nectarous shower
A thirstier minstrel drew in me.

Then follow episodes drawn too closely from Keats, bands of bacchantes and nymphs, who dance with too self-conscious a flow of drapery. But Darley is soon himself again and the reader is whirled over a changing panorama of sea and land, India, Petra, Palmyra, Lebanon, Ionia, the Dardanelles, sees from above the broken body of Icarus tossed backwards and forwards upon the reefs, sees Orpheus torn by the Furies and in a last moment of frenzy the two deaths are mingled and made his own, in the sound of the waves that beat upon Icarus, the sound of the Furies' voices calling to the hunt:

In the caves of the deep—Hollo ! Hollo !—
Lost Youth !—o'er and o'er fleeting billows !
Hollo ! Hollo !—without all ruth !—
In the foam's cold shroud !—Hollo ! Hollo !
To his everlasting sleep !—Lost Youth !

There is a hint of the later technique of Mr. T. S. Eliot in this strange interweaving of echoes from earlier parts of the poem.

The second canto is less varied in note and less varied in sense. Darley falters a little on his long flight, but Mr. Abbott, I think, underrates the extraordinary dignity of wording, and the impressive use of proper names, a use that has some of the genius of Milton in this invocation to Antiquity :

From Ind to Egypt thou art one,
Pyramidal Memphis to Tanjore,
From Ipsambul to Babylon
Reddening the waste suburban o'er ;
From sandlocked Thebes to old Ellore,
Her caverned roof on columns high
Pitched, like a Giant Rood that bore
Headstrong the mountain to the sky.

When it is remembered that this poem was written after Shelley's death, when the most noted poets, with the exception of Wordsworth and Coleridge, were Hood, "Barry Cornwall," Joanna Baillie, and Laetitia Elizabeth Landon, it is easy to realise something of the consternation with which it was greeted by Miss Mitford. None of Darley's friends, to whom

the poem was sent, seems to have suggested a public printing. They were bewildered, a little stunned, perhaps inclined to laugh. Even Miss Mitford, who gave the hungry poet some measured praise, failed to read his poem to the end. Perhaps Darley himself was bewildered by this one great flash of genius, this loud and boistering changeling of his loneliness. The last lines of the poem express a wish to leave "this busy broil" for his own accustomed clime:

There to lay me down at peace
In my own first nothingness.

Certainly his genius seems to have died at the moment of its first complete expression. The body of the poet lived on for another ten years, produced the two monumental plays, wandered about the Continent, wrote charming and growingly despondent letters, as the "pains, aches and petty tortures" of his ill-health increased, to some pretty cousins in Ireland, and died at last from an unromantic decline in London on November 23, 1846, still uncertain and doubting of his own powers.

Am I really a poet? was the question which always haunted him.

You may ask could I not sustain myself on the strength of my own approbation? But it might be only my vanity, not my genius, that was strong. . . . Have not I too, had some, however few, approvers? Why yes, but their chorus in my praise was as small as the voice of my conscience, and, like it, served for little else than to keep me uneasy.

"Seven long years," he had written to Miss Mitford, in a letter, "startling to receive . . . and terrible to answer," "have I lived on a saying of Coleridge's that he sometimes liked to take up *Sylvia*." It is time now for posterity, if only for the sake of *Nepenthe*, to grant Darley the position which he had not the courage and self-confidence to claim for himself.

SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE

By FRANCIS BRETT YOUNG

IN the literary evolution of what condescending Europeans are pleased to call "new countries" there appears to be a recognizable similarity of progression. As far as literature is concerned, the earliest stages are usually barren; which is natural enough. The pioneer has no place for art in his life; his energies of body and of imagination are absorbed to the uttermost in his conflict with untamed nature. His women, of necessity, play their part in the same struggle, bearing children to supplement the available force of labour, protecting them against strange diseases and unfamiliar enemies to life. In a pioneer community romances are lived, not written; leisure and contemplation are frowned upon as being vicious. Books there are none, or, if any, only that epic of the pioneer life which is the Old Testament. Here and there, a man of action, impressed by the strangeness and dignity of his adventure, or a man of religion inspired to bear witness to his missionary faith, sets down, with the economy which, under those conditions, straitens all things, bare records of what he has seen, done, or desired. Such are the chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers, the voyages of early navigators. Their writers handle the pen as they would handle a flint-lock or an axe. A certain stark integrity gives vividness to their records; the abundant material, the virgin curiosity, the exaltation of perils faced and survived, atone for the lack of what we call literary quality. Reading them, we feel ourselves participators in a lived romance. When literary art appears, as sometimes it will, we are startled and exclaim: "These men could write!" But the surprise is a significant comment on our attitude.

The pioneer epoch of South Africa affords some examples of this stirring, artless romance. There are the early travels of Le Vaillant; there is that classic of Big Game Hunting, Harris's *Wild Sports of Southern Africa*—a rare book which every sportsman who wants information straight (as one might say) from the lion's mouth may be advised to acquire. Harris, an army officer on leave, as keen an observer as any good soldier should be, records a hunting-trip to the Orange River and beyond it. His writing is that of a good despatch: clear, business-like, economical. He might have been taken as a model and a tradition in the literature of sport, which has degenerated, alas, into those flushed catalogues of slaughter with which the modern Big Game Hunter bores us. *Wild Sports of Southern Africa* is probably the best book of that kind in existence.

After the hunter comes the missionary. The best record of this character comes, at the beginning of the last century, from Thomas Pringle. Pringle, a Scotch Evangelical missionary, is one of the most interesting figures of the early South African scene. Beneath an exterior that is somewhat precise and forbidding, a clerical uniform of decent black, this pastor hides an ardent and turbulent spirit. He was, in fact, a poet. One of his poems

has become the foundation stone of the South African Anthology. But pioneers are little concerned with poetry, and his lyrics, it must be confessed, are not very good. His prose, on the other hand, is lucid and dignified—interesting also, if only as social history, up to the point when he becomes absorbed by local religious politics : the inevitable situation in which a desire to protect and proselytize the potent and numerous hordes of natives conflicted with the interests of a small community of white men, clinging, by the skin of their teeth, to the verge of a hostile continent. The South African pioneers, particularly the Dutch first-comers, who had only been able to hold what they had by a deliberate ruthlessness, had reason to resent the missionaries' negrophile fervours. The scene of Pringle's labours resembles, broadly speaking, that which has been portrayed in S. G. Millin's novel *God's Stepchildren*. The problems that faced him included the uncomfortable heritage of slavery. Pringle was a man of deep feeling : so the artist—and he was an artist—became submerged in the propagandist and the politician. His work, none the less, is of great interest, if only as a literary document relating to that pioneer phase of South African life which has been dealt with so thoroughly by Cory in his *Rise of the South African People*.

Whether the Dutch pioneers have left significant products of this kind I do not know. No doubt the Capetown library would yield a number of personal records ; but the fact remains that all the books which I have mentioned were printed outside South Africa. Apart from news-sheets and polemical pamphlets, the South African press, at this period, was concerned with politics rather than with creative literature—a fact not to be wondered at in that strenuous age, when the unbroken power of the Kaffir hordes lay like a black thundercloud on every border, and the settled lands lay divided between determined English and equally stubborn Dutch, living in a state of racial rancour and obstinate misunderstanding which found its solution in the forlorn adventure of the Great Trek—that mass migration, the most romantic in modern history, which sent the Boer ox-waggons rumbling out of the Colony and over the Drakensberg to search for space and liberty on virgin plains : an exodus which culminated in the massacre of Weenen and the shattering revenge which put an end to the Zulu power. There lies the material of an epic still to be written. We have an admirable account of it in Cloete's monograph : *The Great Trek*. The contemporary Dutch accounts of the Trek's survivors make poignant reading. But they are not literature.

(2)

So ends the first phase—the Age of the Pioneers—in a confusion of pamphlets, letters, diaries and official documents. In the meantime the literary chronicle must wait for half a century : fifty years of activity as pressing if not so hazardous as that of the pioneer days. By this time, even if the racial rancour has not died (as two Anglo-Dutch wars will prove), the scenes at the bases, those settled areas that lie behind those frontiers where the black man's menace unites both races in a compact

watchfulness, have reached a degree of stability and spiritual composure out of which a literature of some kind might reasonably be expected to emerge. That point was reached in America at the time which produced the great New Englanders—Hawthorne, Emerson, Whitman—in Australia at that which gave rise to a literature of minor significance: the poems of Lindsay Gordon, the romances of Henry Kingsley and Rolf Boldrewood. The covered waggons have rolled away, to the West, to the North. Over the scene which they have left a calm peace broods, tempting the efflorescence of a native literature. The second period of a new civilization has been reached. The time is ripe for the great South African novel.

It comes. Perhaps, after all, it is not very great. It is, at least, South African. In 1883, George Meredith, acting as "reader" to the venerable firm of Chapman and Hall, accepted for publication a novel entitled *The Story of an African Farm*, by a young woman named Olive Schreiner, who disguised her identity under the assertive pseudonym of Ralph Iron.

I find it is generally assumed that Olive Schreiner was of South African Dutch descent. This is not so. Her father, the acknowledged original of old Otto, the overseer in her masterpiece, was a German Evangelical pastor. Her mother was an Englishwoman named Lindall; there is a village of that name, a place of signal beauty, perched upon the limestone curb that bounds the southern extremity of the English Lake-District. Olive Schreiner herself was born in Cape Colony, and the scene which provided her with the all-important background for her great novel was that which has inspired a later South African novelist, Pauline Smith, the mountainous table-land of the Karoo.

Not only her genius but also the circumstances of her early life have something in common with those of Charlotte Brontë. Like the authoress of *Jane Eyre* she adopted a male pseudonym. She also became a governess, and found imaginative refuge from a life of spiritual exile in the composition of her book. It is in these pages, for the first time, that the South African landscape, which, in its marvels of clarity, light and colour, is among the most subtly moving on earth, breeding among those who have known it a nostalgia that has no equal in poignancy, is displayed with the perceptions of a poet. In place of the admirable detailed descriptions of the earlier writers, Olive Schreiner conveys that quality of the South African scene which can only be described by the much-abused word "atmosphere"—"the truth"—to quote Conrad—"manifold and one underlying its aspect; its one, illuminating, convincing quality." In other words, this woman, like all the greatest of novelists, was a poet.

The story itself is a slender one, ill-constructed, formless, admittedly melodramatic. Yet, through its ill-adjusted pages, there shines continually the indubitable flame of genius, transfusing, irradiating them with a glow, a fervour that beggars the resources of criticism. The enraptured Cecil Rhodes, a genius of another quality, realized his kinship with this strange writer. He found himself "unable to account for the book's splendour." And so do I. I can only acknowledge it, suggesting that

this splendour sprang, as did that of Rhodes's own achievement, from a surpassing love of its setting, of the red, passionate earth of Africa—so rich, so cruel, so fervid, so austere—to which these two spirits, so strong and so dissimilar, were bound by an imaginative tie more potent than mere heredity. That there is something in this theory may be argued from the fact that when later, following the success of her book, Olive Schreiner went to England, consorting with writers of her own period such as John Oliver Hobbes, Edward Carpenter, Arthur Symons and Havelock Ellis, her genius, robbed of its true inspiration, lost its moving quality. Her later writings—even the huge posthumous novel *Undine*—which proceed from ethical and sociological enthusiasms, lack the original fire of the *Story of an African Farm*. That book remains the most perfect example of an imperfect masterpiece ever written.

It might be imagined that the appearance of a work so powerful, so truly characteristic of the soil, would have been the herald and inspiration of a new period in South African literature. At least, you might suppose, this writer would have found eager imitators. And, indeed, if the settled life of the Cape Province had been allowed to develop along the normal lines of a new agricultural community this, probably, would have happened. During the composition of this novel a new inter-racial struggle, the First Anglo-Boer War, distracted and deranged the South African scene. Immediately following on an inconclusive peace there emerged a factor which not only dislocated the continuity of the Colony's existence but remains, to this day, the dominating influence of South Africa's destiny. In the grey conglomerate quartzite of the Witwatersrand—the Ridge of the White Waters—a gold field of unexampled magnitude was discovered. In the neighbourhood of Kimberley, among the pebbly clay-pockets of "blue-ground," diamonds were found.

Immediately the prospect of a slow, organic development along pastoral or agricultural lines was shattered. The tide of human interest and activity surged northward, into the Transvaal. From every corner of the earth greedy hordes of prospectors, traders, speculators, came flocking in search of easy riches. The influence that has given South Africa a premature material development submerged its spiritual life. The South Africa of the *African Farm* went under and was lost for ever, leaving that strange book as its sole and splendid literary monument.

(3)

Up to that time immigration had been gradual, incomers had been absorbed, almost unnoticed, into the traditions of the Anglo-Dutch colonial civilization. Now—and the situation has its parallel elsewhere—foreigners disembarked in such predominant numbers, bringing with them traditions so various and ideals so alien, that all that was most typical of Olive Schreiner's South Africa became, for the time, exceptional. In an era of social flux, when the eyes of most men are fixed on the making of easy money, in a restless era, when no human abode is looked upon as permanent, no art can push deep roots into the soil. Now even the settled

South turned its eyes Northward. New mouths to be fed; a new prosperity to be shared! If books were to be written—and nothing, it seems, can stop the writing of books—they would deal, naturally enough, with the superficially romantic aspects of the developing country, resembling, if a parallel be needed, the literature of action as represented by Bret Harte and the romanticists of the Wild West. The ancient placidity of Concord passes for slowness. The age of Immigration has arrived.

It brings with it, as might be expected, a shallow flood of fiction. Rider Haggard produces a kind of adventure story calculated to excite tired minds. The romantic-historical essay called *Cetewayo and his White Neighbours* and the charming *Jess* (a story of the First Boer War) are followed by such highly-coloured adventures as *King Solomon's Mines*, *Alan Quatermaine* and *She*. Excellent, of their kind: for Haggard was a competent writer, full of zest, and dowered with an imagination fit to enthrall unsophisticated youth. The Second Boer War lent its scene to a flamboyant best-seller, *The Dop Doctor*, the crude, violent, intensely sentimental narrative of a woman who called herself Richard Dehan, anticipating in its theatrical presentation of the scene's surface, the cheapness of its emotions, its exalted rhapsodical erotism and its hysterical adulation of the stupid, prepotent male, the novels of other women such as Cynthia Stockley and (in a more avowedly sentimental vein) the Rhodesian Gertrude Page.

The era of Immigration gets, in short, the literature it deserves: books aimed at a definite audience—one of harassed city-dwellers, preponderantly female, whose eyes are fixed, pathetically, on the wide spaces that surround their cramped life. One good adventure story emerges from this welter, the work of a government official, one of "Milner's young men," John Buchan. It is called *Prester John*: a sincere and manly work that another Scotsman, Stevenson, might easily have written and would certainly have admired. A short story by the same writer, *The Moon Endureth*, could only have been written by a man who knew South Africa and loved it.

Beneath this flood of high-pitched romantic rubbish some sober work continued to be written. Scully, a sadly-neglected writer of genuine power and insight, published several volumes of sketches which carry on, without its flaming spiritual force, the tradition of the *African Farm*. Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, a man of culture and a first-rate field-naturalist, wrote a book about the wild life of the *veld*, a classic in its limited kind: *Fock of the Bushveld*. But literature is still in hiding.

Meanwhile, oblivious of the arts, modern South Africa has been born. The Anglo-Dutch racial feud has been settled, perhaps for ever, by England's iniquitous destruction of the two Boer Republics and the generous, far-sighted peace which the Liberal ministry of Campbell-Bannerman imposed on them. A wave of expansion and prosperity swept the country. A stable government, in which both races shared, gave to South Africa a new sense of security. Johannesburg is no longer a mining

settlement but a great modern city ; Capetown shares with Pretoria the dignity of a capital. The South Africans begin to realize that they have a nationality of which they may well be proud, a past that is worth remembering. Two historians appear.

The older of these, Theal, has written a history of many volumes ; into them he has gathered an enormous mass of information for which future generations of South Africans must be grateful. As an history this huge work has grave defects : a partisan tinge and a certain dry bitterness of presentation invalidate much of its labour. The author, learned as he may have been, was not a writer of quality ; the magnitude and variety of the material overwhelmed a mind that could not grasp its essence. Theal's *History of South Africa* is in no sense a work of art. As a basis for future works of art it may prove invaluable.

The second historian, Cory, has produced, in his *Rise of the South African People*, four volumes of far greater significance : a masterly, well-balanced, admirably documented work. Its interest is centred on the story of the Eastern Province, that vexed frontier of Kaffirland baptized, in the last century, by so much devoted blood. It tells, with a sense of detail and perspective that is beyond praise, one of the most stirring and romantic stories of human endeavour in modern times, in a style which, if it be not brilliantly illuminating in the present manner of historical writing, is never slovenly, cheap, or undignified. Even the foreigner will find Cory's *Rise of the South African People* an engrossing romance.

In the midst of this hopeful period another disaster fell upon South Africa ; the outbreak of the Great War—a disaster providentially limited, for though the South African forces acquitted themselves magnificently in Delville Wood, in Botha's invasion of German South-West Africa and in Smuts's East African campaign, the country realized the benefits of its remoteness from the centre of the struggle in a relative quietude and an absolute, abundant prosperity. Gold was at a premium, and the Rand had gold to offer. In another comparatively sheltered country, America, the war gave rise to a literary renaissance the growing force of which is now being felt. In South Africa the same period produced the two most considerable writers who have appeared since Olive Schreiner's death. It is significant, perhaps, that both of them are women.

The first, in order of time, Sarah Gertrude Millin, the most widely read of modern South African writers, is a product of the urban civilization of the Rand, that sprawling cosmopolis which spreads its ungainly length along thirty miles of white, gleaming mine-dumps. A woman of keen observation, an inquisitive intellect, and a genuine literary gift, she is the first South African writer of any consequence to realize the potential literary wealth of the great gold-reef—not only in those violent contrasts of *chiaroscuro* which gave to Olive Schreiner's landscape its dancing light and sombre magnificence, but in the social and racial contrasts, no less remarkable, which the microcosm of the new Johannesburg displays, and in the added contrast between the scrambling activities of the City of

Gold and the emptiness of the great expanse of *veld* that surround it, where the life of sleepy *dorps* perpetuates a tradition established before gold was dreamed of.

One of her earliest novels, *The Dark River*, displayed all the qualities which we have learned to associate with her work ; a thoughtful and dignified intelligence ; a prose style of distinction ; a sense of beauty qualified by a certain self-consciousness in its expression ; a profound, yet somewhat troubled ethical bent ; a faith and a pity slightly tinged with despair. There is no danger of underestimating the integrity, the intellectual curiosity of this writer. She has thought much and deeply on the social perplexities that vex the life of small towns (as in her book *Middle Class*) and on the South African racial problems posed by the impact of Dutch on English and of both on the African native—that colour question (beside which the American colour question seems a political trifle) with which she has dealt in the admirable novel called *God's Stepchildren*. She has presented all these problems seriously and developed them with power, penetration and real knowledge of the conditions which they imply. She is always a careful and a conscious artist, cognisant of the best literary modes of her time, as eagerly “ up to date ” (even when she writes, as in *God's Stepchildren*, of the last century) as a stop-press news-column. Perhaps it is this very quality of eagerness, to which the self-consciousness of a new civilization makes its writers particularly susceptible, that marks her greatest defect. South African born though she may be, one feels, in reading her books, that her eyes are directed with humble wistfulness toward the “ advanced ” literary journals on both sides of the Atlantic. As a valid excuse she has the fact that the South African reading public is a small one which increases slowly ; but the fact remains that her work has no autochthonous flavour. Admirable as it is, it does not carry with it that smell of the African soil, that essential odour of the *veld* which made Olive Schreiner's writing a passable substitute for a mail-boat ticket to the Cape. Any civilized European, English, French or German, if only he were sufficiently intelligent and observant, could have written her books—and might, I hasten to add, have been proud of having written them. A great writer she may be. The great South African writer she is not.

I dwell upon this aspect of Mrs. Millin's work as a particular disqualification rather than as a general defect. It reveals itself most markedly in what I believe to be the best of her books, which is not a novel, but a critical survey of the civilization of which she is a part, published under the title of *The South Africans*. Here, against a historical background portrayed with the most scrupulous fairness and integrity, she has built up a picture of the various groups of humanity of which the South African nation is composed. This picture is as vivid as it is true, as just, from the literary point of view, as it is masterly. She has dealt with every element in it faithfully, sympathetically ; not only with the main racial units, English, Dutch, Half-caste and Negro, but with the Asiatics, Jews and

Indians, whose later infiltration complicates the confusion of the scene. For anyone who desires to understand that scene and its implications—particularly to the South African himself, bewildered by the conflict of political, racial and social prejudices—this work should be a textbook of inestimable value, and all the more valuable in that this critic has the detachment of an outsider. For, passionately though she may feel for her country and dearly as she may love it, such is the final impression that Mrs. Millin's writings leave. Though entirely benignant she is as impartial as an influenza bacillus ; and this exaggeration of a virtue has inhibited her vision, so that she sees pathos rather than beauty, and makes the fire of her imagination resemble a distant and artificial illuminant rather than that fierce sunlight which is proper to the South African scene.

There is another important element in Mrs. Millin's detachment. Even when she is dealing with rural subjects she is, I think, essentially an urban writer. Now the industrial development of South Africa has differed from that of other virgin lands in a prematureness rendered possible by the chance discovery of the Johannesburg gold-field. Civilization has not pushed Northward as, for example, the civilization of the United States moved West, consolidating its progress step by step. No sooner was gold discovered than railways were flung inland from the seaboard to the Rand, leaving, on either side of their tracks, vast areas of neglected and undeveloped land. To reach that fountain of easy wealth South Africa skipped over half the width of Europe. But the gold of the Rand, geologists tell us, is not inexhaustible. Some day, and not so distantly, the last thin tons of ore will be crushed, and the Golden Age (which is not, in this case, synonymous with the Age of Innocence) will end. The country will be left stranded with a top-heavy industrialism. Later, a new industrialism, founded on metals less precious and labours more stubborn, may arise. In the meantime South Africa will probably return to the point at which its population stampeded Northward in the eighteen-eighties, and work out its arduous salvation on the despised land. The destiny of South Africa must be wrought, in the end, from her soil ; and that is one of the reasons why the second of her post-war novelists, Pauline Smith, appears to me to be a more genuine expression of her essential spirit than Mrs. Millin.

In writing of Pauline Smith, we are more concerned, for the present, with promise than with achievement. She has to her credit only two books against Mrs. Millin's half-dozen. The literary field which she has explored is a narrow one compared with that which Mrs. Millin has surveyed and exploited ; the burden of social and racial preoccupations that weighs upon the older writer's acute but puzzled mind does not concern her at all. She is, first and last, as Mr. Arnold Bennett discovered in his preface to her first volume of stories, *The Little Karoo*, an artist.

That fervent preface might easily have afflicted Pauline Smith with acute self-consciousness, a disease to which more than one young writer of promise has succumbed. That she survived it without infection, as her next book, *The Beadle*, proved, is a confirmation of the writer's stability

and of the critic's prophetic judgment. As a matter of fact, *The Little Karoo* deserved the compliments which Mr. Bennett paid her. The writing, though obviously unpractised, had a curious, thin limpidity, a dry purity which resembled that of the Karoo air itself. It has a prose style almost *naïf* in its simpleness and austerity, bursting, at moments when the emotion of the contents overstrains their fragile vehicle, into an efflorescence of lyrical beauty as startling as the sudden Spring of those high plains. Reading these stories one does not stop to admire or appraise some sudden acuteness of observation, profundity of thought or felicity of phrase. One does not say: "How keen, how wise, how clever she is!" as, constantly, one has said these things of Mrs. Millin. The acknowledgment of Pauline Smith's power lies in the fact of the reader's complete, uncritical surrender to her illusion. The question of whether she is keen or wise or clever does not arise. In all these qualities Mrs. Millin could probably give her points. Yet here, but for an occasional lispng uncertainty which speaks of youth, one hears the authentic accent of a born writer.

The people about whom Pauline Smith writes in *The Little Karoo* are human material particularly suited to display her talent. They belong to that remarkable race the Cape Dutch; a simple, austere, industrious and, often, ignorant, race. The very isolation of their lives and the impressiveness of the mountain-girdled theatre in which they are lived makes them fit subjects for drama as this author conceives it. Their very limitations, the iron-bound rigidity of their social and moral code, make drama seem more natural and inevitable than it can ever be among modernized communities whose freedom of conduct knows no limits, where men and women are a law unto themselves. For the essence of drama is contest, and in a life that has no standards there is nothing to struggle against. With this human material, set against a background that has, for her, the mystical significance of impressions stored in an unconscious childhood, Pauline Smith has written, in *The Little Karoo*, eight stories, pitiful, ruthless, tender, human and revealing, which mark, in my judgment, the highest point of artistic creation that has been reached in South Africa since Olive Schreiner's death.

She is, moreover, in a purer degree than any other writer, Mrs. Millin included, authentically South African. Let me be more precise. In a number of novels Mrs. Millin has described with admirably accurate detail a great variety of South African scenery; she is able to make these isolated scenes living and present by the knowledge and literary power which she has used in describing them. They remain isolated scenes, which is, probably, all that she desires them to be, picked out and pinned to her page like perfect entomological specimens. But when Pauline Smith writes of South Africa the reader is conscious not merely of that small portion of it which she is describing but of the vast lands that surround it—from the white gleaming sands of False Bay and the oak-alleys of Stellenbosch, over the Karoo, which she has made her own, past

the cold crags of the Drakensberg and the Vaal River to where the High Veld dips down into the tropics and goes rolling onward, in hot monotony, to the Great Lakes and the Mountains of the Moon. All Africa, in one breath! The power to suggest by the written word so much that is unwritten, these overtones that go on endlessly vibrating, is one of the characteristics of a great writer. Whether Pauline Smith has the other necessary qualities I cannot say. The volume of her work is too small to justify a pronouncement, and her second book, the more ambitious work called *The Beadle*, adds to *The Little Karoo* small material for criticism. The wind bloweth where it listeth. At any moment this young and vigorous country may blossom into literature as the dry *veld* breaks into its astounding *bloemtyd*. Here and there, as I have indicated, a flower has shown itself—in the prose of those two novelists, in that remarkable poem, *The Flaming Terrapin*, by Roy Campbell. But the Spring has not yet come.

THE OLD, THE NEW AND THE WELLS WORLDS

By ROBERT HERRING

I

MR. WELLS is extremely fortunate. On the strength of past good work, he can set pen to paper confident, one imagines, that whatever he writes will find publisher and readers. One imagines this, because otherwise it is a little hard to see how or why *The King Who was a King** should come out. But a hen is popularly supposed to continue running after its head has been cut off, and in the same way, if you talk long enough, people will listen to you long after they find it difficult to believe you still have anything to say, because when you are talking, one might as well hear it, to make sure. It was inevitable that that would be the spirit in which one would approach Mr. Wells' newest, or latest, contribution to cosmic constructiveness. It has been made my duty to approach it because it is described as "the book of a film;" but, in truth, there is not very much of a film about it, while Mr. Wells has not troubled to make much of a book, either. It is neither one thing nor the other. It is Mr. Wells still writing. But one thing a book and a film often have in common is a story; and a consideration of the story of *The King Who was a King* will show how remarkable it is that it should be thought possible to get away with it.

II

The book-film opens with a prelude which sets the cosmic implications of the ensuing story before us. Mr. Wells' thesis is that "the Peace of the World can only be secured through the establishment of the world-controls of the common interests of mankind, and that if war is to come to an end there is nothing for it but frank opposition to and struggle with the patriotic symbols and suggestions that sustain the base spirit of nationalism."

It need hardly be said that one starts out in full sympathy with such a theme. The important thing is how it is treated. It will be on that that our interest will depend. And it is here that Mr. Wells does an extraordinary thing. To make everything quite clear, he has a prologue set in the Stone Age, thus reminding us of *Back to Methuselah*. He then goes to all the trouble of inventing Agravia, a republic, and Clavery and Saevia, two mythical kingdoms, with ritual, royalties, mountains and frontiers and the rest of the properties of a musical comedy at Daly's in the hey-day of José Collins. Into these are thrown deposits of a mineral called calcomite, over the supply and control of which Powers fight and plot. The story thus becomes an Anthony Hope affair, without, one may say, the hope.

The explosion of a bomb in the cathedral of Clavopolis makes an

**The King Who was a King*. By H. G. Wells. Benn. 7s. 6d.

earnest young American, Paul Zelinka, heir to the throne. He goes to assume his post. His cousin Prince Michael is, after the manner of stage cousins, especially royal ones, hostile. He stirs up strife, and calls on the new king to address the people in their own language. But the king has every intention of being a king, and he has apparently been learning on the voyage over, for he says, "As yet I cannot speak our dear language rapidly or well. But I learn daily. My heart has come home. My tongue has come home." After this, Prince Michael slinks through the crowd, being jostled in the pantomime manner reserved for villains and all who wear black tights. But the people are only Paul's temporarily. Agravia becomes aggressive, egged on by a Power behind it. It seeks to "play the part of dog in the manger to the calcomite." It would have been an interesting sequence to have seen if the calcomite appreciated this. But there is no time for frivolity. A war is about to break out between Agravia and Saevia, which has in its boundaries the only other deposits of this tiresome calcomite. Saevia is ruled by a princess who reminds me of the queen of *The Queen was in the Parlour*. She is led away by all the symbols and suggestions of patriotism. But she is in love with King Paul of Clavery, whilst Prince Michael is in love with her. When Paul refuses to make war on Agravia, she says scornfully, in the best movie tradition, "Marry like peasants for peace and quietness! Join our estates to be better off! No, Paul, marry me, if marry we must, for Victory and Empire!" But Paul, who has the usual loyal Chancellor and the not so usual faithful Captain of the Guards, has a midnight interview with the President of Agravia, while the Princess joins Michael. Clavery revolts. Paul has come to an understanding with Agravia, and when he meets the revolutionaries, shoots Michael and wins his princess. The imminence of war has made the people of Clavery realise that they really did not want another one, and Paul is able to establish a world-control of calcomite. The politicians of the world are left brooding over the next step which this demands . . . a political world unity.

This is all very exciting, and tolerable fun, were we not a little anxious as to whether we ought to be taking it seriously. At the end Mr. Wells states, "I submit that I have provided producer and composer with the material for a handsome and possible, if difficult, film, and that I have done my part to show that a hard, fairly complex argument can be stated more effectively upon the screen than in any other way." It is graceful of him to acknowledge this conviction in the second half of his sentence, but I cannot for one instant see why he has bothered to invent all this elaborate *opéra bouffe* setting and libretto to prove his thesis. It is not in itself a very interesting story. We have definitely to put ourselves back to enjoy it, and it has all got to be taken and translated out of its terms, if we are to see it as we are apparently meant to, into terms with which we are familiar, terms which fit life as we know it. None of us knows life sufficiently well for us ever to be able to create new worlds very convincingly, and the purpose of artists is to reveal, by their superlative eloquence,

the import of the life around us, the life of which we are a muddled and confused part. Mr. Wells' love of new worlds to tinker with always seems to me to result from the fact that he is not very much at home in this. His interest with this world seems to have stopped about 1910. I try hard, but I do not see how he relates to life as I know it, to thought as my generation thinks. He is more or less right, but why does he bother? We accept all he says, and try to go further. We may not get there, but I am not sure whose fault that is. This solving the problems of one world by creating another is only a bringing-up-to-date of the dreams of the old, and when it is finished, it is on a different plane, but it isn't where our world has reached in the meantime.

After all, what does such a story do? It takes a number of incidents with which we are familiar and sets them in some countries which have to be made real to us, in the obvious way of making them like other countries. A king is seen resolutely refusing to declare war, and nearly losing his kingdom, and finally winning by primitive methods. The plea against the outdatedness and stupidity of war seems to me to have already been stated more effectively in several films. As a recognition of this fact would have prevented this short book from coming forth with such an air of novelty, I propose to enumerate them.

First, of course, there was *The Big Parade*. A great part of Mr. Wells' view of women was expressed here. The departure of the sons and the girl to whom John Gilbert was engaged will be remembered. Mr. Wells, stating that in the vast and complex struggles that lie before us, women will be mainly assessors and sustainers, says that they must be brought out of that state in which they regard themselves as "beloved individuals, queens of beauty and the chief end of life" for whom men fight, to the state where, instead of attempting "to make a personal lover of Hercules," they realise "the greater beauty of his larger and ampler purpose."

The first view of women was subtly satirised in *The Big Parade*, and it has been, for those who have eyes to see it, in hundreds of war-films. *Shoulder Arms* is one long exposure of the fooleries of which war makes us capable. In *The End of St. Petersburg*, which Russian film has to be shown privately in this country by the Film Society, Pudovkin shows us this kind of woman again. At dinner, gaily-gowned, they applaud Kerensky. Kerensky is the kind of man such women have made, says Pudovkin. He struts into the limelight. A woman flings him a rose. His speech fires on. Woman lean across the dessert with gleaming eye, seeing a personal issue in it. The excitement is intense. One woman finally has hysterics out of sheer patriotism. And if it was not, the emotionalism that brought it on is part of patriotism, of that kind. Again, in this film, we see troops leaving. The façades are hung with flags. The balconies are filled with women. Truth's edges, in fact, are blurred in excitement. Showers of roses descend on the troops. This is Pudovkin's idea of the part women of the old order play in war. "Go and fight for us, and we will fling roses at you." How lovely! Women have a control of the roses, so they can

make men fight. Women can cover up buildings with waving flags and have a really good time. And here Pudovkin puts a shot of a statue weeping. Tears run from its eyes. Stone can weep, says Pudovkin, surely, when women fling roses on men going out to be blown into screaming pieces, to fall face downwards and lie for days in pools. And the men go out, and they fight, until they begin to ask, "What are we fighting for?" and then they go back and fight for something else at home. They fight for their freedom from a lot of old-fashioned catch-phrases, for their liberty to construct a scheme of life to fit living. And a different kind of woman greets them, a woman with potatoes which she gives to all when she sees they need them, though she meant them for her husband. The men fight, because, as Mr. Wells says, "it is mere pedantry to hold that force cannot be used or death inflicted for the suppression of war." Surely this film of Pudovkin's is what we are seeking always, and rarely find, the first-rate? And having found it, must we turn away to . . . read? This happened in Russia, not in Clavopolis, and Russia, despite Sir W. Joynson-Hicks, is real, not a fairyland, not even a bogey-land. *Potemkin* happened at Odessa, not in Clavopolis. It was bad meat and not an imaginary mineral that caused the mutiny in *Potemkin*. Something quite normal and everyday which everyone knew. Calcomite is handed us in *The King Who was a King* heavily marked "Symbol. This side up with care." It is so definitely made to be symbol that it cannot be anything else. The meat in *Potemkin* was a piece of meat round which so much inevitable drama centred that invented by the director as a symbol. It started out as a part of life, and life it became a symbol. It did not start out to be a symbol, least of all was it and other currents of life, striking it, made it a symbol. It is the same with the piece of fur in *Storm Over Asia*. The modern woman, the constructive, unsexconscious, helpful woman is found in Baranovskaja in *The End of St. Petersburg*, and again in *Mother*; in Anna Sten in *The Son* and in the elder sister of *The Peasant Women*, a Russian film known in Germany as *The Sinful Village*. The village was sinful because it took the old standards of life, lived on outworn conventions which caused distortion, and behaved like a set of melodrama characters reciting lines which had once meant something and now meant only that their speakers lacked initiative. These are the women that Mr. Wells wants, but he has not created them. These are women first, and only, by the sheer force of their living, do they become more. They are never Mothers of All Europe or Princess Helen to start with.

It may be that Mr. Wells has his eye well on the public and is wise in wrapping up or setting his story in a romantic atmosphere of mountain kingdoms, princes and princesses, even though it is against that very atmosphere that he declaims. It may be that he thinks the public, chary of starkness and wanting colour, will accept his message, if only subconsciously, if it is thus wrapped up. But the fact remains that the two outstanding successes in Berlin at this moment are *The End of St. Petersburg* and *Storm Over Asia*, and that German film-exhibitors are very worried

because the German public won't go to any other films. "There is a tendency", says *The Cinema* in an interview with Dr. Galberson, "for the whole of the patrons to flock to see only the best pictures and to ignore the others." So, if this is so, Mr. Wells' view of the public, about which he ought to know so much, is a little behind the times . . . unless he is writing only for the British public, which is equally an encouraging of "the base spirit of nationalism." But perhaps it can be seen what kind of a film it would make, if we consider various directors whose work has lately been seen in London.

III

First, because *The Last Warning* was trade-shown a day or two ago, one thinks of Paul Leni. He would be just right in achieving the sense of claustrophobia that Paul feels, and he would work up the conspiracy excellently. But I cannot quite see him dealing with that calcomite as Mr. Wells would like. He would make it the subject of a crook drama, and it would be very thrilling, but it would hardly go with *The Man Who Laughs* atmosphere in which he would envelop Clavery. What other director works well under the light that beats? There is Lubitsch. He might, if one can judge by *The Patriot*, have the skill to invest this fantastic story with all the seriousness its author feels it demands. For in *The Patriot* the pity of the unreality was brought out, and the fact that it was all unreal was taken as a fact and made a living fact. Lubitsch would know what to do with those terraces of Clavopolis, that heraldry and the uniforms. He has already done most of it before. The midnight meeting that avoided disaster was done in *Forbidden Paradise* so well that it became the test when I was trying to discover if Paul's interview at the frontier could be made to seem real. The councils Lubitsch would revel in, and he would be at home in vast rooms and corridors. The scene where Paul and the Chancellor sit "in the lower corner . . . two human beings in the grip of larger powers", while "the camera approaches and recedes from these men as may be necessary" is complete Lubitsch. The whole use of light in this scene, on which Mr. Wells is accordingly to be congratulated, is Lubitsch. It was practised with devastating effect in *The Patriot*. The scenes where Paul relaxes from his stiff uniforms Lubitsch, and von Stroheim as well, would love, and this director is of course brilliant in awakening one's sympathy for a young man forced to be king. There is *The Student Prince* to prove it. But the trouble is that Lubitsch likes his irony, and there would be a touch of humour underlying his treatment which would be quite at variance with Mr. Wells' conception. He might even have an ironic twist for the whole thesis, which would be delightful but fatal, not for the peace of the world, but for the world of Wells. So Lubitsch would have to be ruled out as a prospective director for *The King Who was a King* and instead we shall have to content ourselves with seeing his *Forbidden Paradise*, *The Student Prince* and *The Patriot*, all of which are about and are recommended.

There is Eric von Stroheim. *The Wedding March* was at the Plaza in the middle of February. He also made *The Merry Widow* and set it in a country called Monteblanca, which caused the ex-Crown Prince of Montenegro to bring an action because the name of the young man in the film, as also in the operetta, was Danilo. But von Stroheim, though he uses a cathedral as no one else can, and is a master of cynicism, is notorious for the time he takes over a film, and this would make the various hints supplied by the author more out of date than ever. I can think of Karl Grune, who has just finished filming *Waterloo*. He made a film called *At The Edge of the World*, which was very like Mr. Wells' story. There was a mill at the edge of the world, on the frontier of two unspecified countries. The mill was a strategic point, and the miller himself represented constructiveness. A travelling spy, in the guise of a pedlar, represented commerce . . . and so on. Everything was heavily symbolical, and this film really shows up the weaknesses of Mr. Wells' method so much that it would be unfair to engage Herr Grune.

The director will clearly have to be someone with something of Mr. Wells' mentality, someone whose best work has already been done and whose present work serves only to date that best work. There is Pola Negri, who might easily turn to this when she has finished Mr. Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*. But I think Griffith would be better, because I have seen his *Drums of Love*, and Mr. Wells' ideas of what are significant details fit in with this early director's. The subtitle to this film is *The Story of a Pawn Who Would Not Play the Game*. I kept this from you till the end, in case you would not read any further, but after all, it is by Mr. Wells. The film-book is full of flashbacks, which Griffith would love and he would also love the symbolism. I wonder if Mr. Wells would like D. W. Griffith? I have a feeling he has two directors in mind for his film, himself and Max Reinhardt. I saw Reinhardt's production of *Burlesque* in Berlin; it was incredibly shoddy and old-fashioned, but I understand he is looking for a film story.

IV

Sub-technical directions are flung into this book in the hope that the public will think they are reading a scenario and discovering how a film is made and how clever it is of Mr. Wells to know so much about it; though, of course, as he reminds us, in 1895 he initiated a patent with R. W. Paul for a "Time Machine." This machine anticipated "most of the stock methods and devices of the screen drama." Mr. Wells' present directions seem to repeat those methods and devices. He has a great love of superimposing one picture on top of another. Setting out as he does to oppose patriotic symbols, he superimposes the leopard of Clavery on every possible occasion. As soon as anything touching the future of Clavery or the wishes of Paul occurs, that leopard fades in on the speakers. It appears in the sky, it sprawls across the rooms, it is enlarged from a lamp standard. The suggestive power of this wretched leopard is thrust at us in the most hackneyed screen manner.

Words are also constantly appearing across the scene. I do not mean as simple subtitles, of which the author demands an inordinate supply, but as premonitions and echoes over the pictures. Two men will talk ; their words appear above their heads. This shows a fear of cutting to a subtitle and fear of cutting shows an insufficient grasp of the medium. Mr. Wells shows very little appreciation of cutting and no belief that the public would share such an appreciation. His methods are the oldest, and can be understood when it is stated that on many occasions he talks of an audience.

There is no such thing as an audience in a modern film. There are participants. The real modern cinema takes each one of us up and immerses us in the action. It does not leave us sitting in our seats, just watching. It reaches and anticipates our thoughts. It makes the screen that is before your eyes the mind itself that is behind them. It does this by camera angle, so that we seem to be in the picture, in the rooms and parks themselves, by moving cameras and by cutting. There is no such thing as an audience, static and staring, and Mr. Wells does the cinema harm and the public harm in writing, at this late date, as if there were. It may not be intentional. He may be fully aware and it may be only negligence that lets him use the word ; but it seems to show a wrong approach and will make a number of people think that he is not very sure of what he is talking about, which is to be avoided, by Mr. Wells as by everyone else.

The writing of the book is slack. The descriptions are uninspired, the dialogue undistinguished. There is a great deal of dialogue. It is all written in the style of mediocre subtitles. I do not think this was necessary. Mr. Wells flatters himself if he thinks that the "you" of his favourite "you and I" speech to the reader has none of the taste of the combination. I do not see why we should still have to read "I thought I had inherited a kingdom. I seem to have inherited a war," or "Then you are a traitor King. Why do we stop here talking?" Much of the dialogue, while uninteresting to read, would be fatiguing to look at on the screen. But if the book does not read like a book over which a normal amount of trouble has been taken, it does not read in the least like a scenario. I do not know why Mr. Wells shied at writing his script in the form of scenes and shots. Does he think it would have baffled the public ? It could not have been more baffling than this changing from narrative to stage directions. Why should anything approaching a film-technique be thought to result from such a mixture ? One cannot be half-heartedly modern. If it is revolutionary to write a book in the form of a scenario, be revolutionary. At least let us have a form of some kind. The scenarios published in *transition* and various other reviews of the advance guard are clearness itself in their pictorial development. There is too much explanation about *The King Who was a King*. Why it was written and how, and what must be chosen to go into it, and all the depressing business of an author pretending to take the reader into his workroom.

There is no excuse for saying the public do not yet know the technica

terms of the studio, for *Through A Yellow Glass*, by Oswell Blakeston, has been published by Pool (7s. 6d.). This is a film book of which only one of its merits is that it is up-to-date. To tour a studio and see how a film is made, from haphazard start to belated finish, may sound dull, but under Mr. Blakeston's expert guidance it is not only an extremely amusing experience but a great stimulation to serious consideration of the cinema. Under his light style and persistent, at times too persistent, irony, the author reveals, by examining the extraordinary methods which govern film-making, a knowledge of how films should be made and what should be made. The reader is left in possession of a number of ideas to do with constructive cinema which he never knew he owned. Incidentally, it may be remarked that he will have learnt without tears the meaning of those mysterious terms, the use of which by the half-initiated, as we have seen, is so baffling. *Through A Yellow Glass*, while it can be read on its own merits, makes a valuable preparation for Mr. Wells' book, which has perhaps received an examination for which it was never intended. So let it be said that as a story, it would make a picturesque film of a familiar kind, while as a book, were it written differently, it would provide a disquisition on one of Mr. Wells' favourite themes. In the form in which it is presented to us, it falls between two styles, and though there will doubtless be many to whom this will be an entertaining spectacle, it contributes singularly little either to the cinema or to modern thought.

CORRESPONDENCE

SOMBRERO

(To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY)

SIR,—Readers of Mr. Armstrong's most interesting account of the court-martial of Captain Lake may possibly be interested to know the sequel to the marooning of Robert Jeffery on Sombrero Island. Mr. Armstrong leaves an impression that Jeffery was never seen or heard of again. Actually, however, he survived his experience. He was nine days on the island living on bark and black lizards and such water as he could find in crevices of the rocks. Ultimately, he was taken off by the American schooner *Adams*, Captain John Dennis, sailing from Martinique to Marblehead. So it was that when Captain Lake, fresh from his unpleasant interview with Sir Alexander Cochrane, returned to Sombrero Island, no trace of the boy could be found.

Jeffery returned in the *Adams* to Marblehead where he remained for two years before making his existence known to his people in England. He was then sent home in H.M.S. *Thistle*. Captain Lake's solicitor was waiting for him in port with £600 and a written undertaking not to prosecute his late captain. Jeffery pocketed the one and signed the other, and that was the end of the business. I have told the whole story in *Strange Adventures of the Sea*.

Naval captains committed some odd high-handed acts in the old days. There was a Captain Rolls who marooned a disrespectful midshipman on an uninhabited island in the China Seas; and, more recently, there was a peppery commander who fell out with one of his lieutenants and confined him in a hen coop for the rest of the voyage.—Yours etc.

Quality House, 69 Great Russell Street,
London, W.C.1.

J. G. LOCKHART.

(To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY)

SIR,—In his exceedingly interesting article, *Sombrero*, in your February number, Mr. Martin Armstrong reconstructs the circumstances of the case of Robert Jeffery in remarkably imaginative fashion. But he is mistaken in thinking that in the evidence of the Master "we have the whole story of Robert Jeffery." Possibly *The Sporting Magazine*, on whose report of the court-martial he bases his article, limited itself to the details of the trial.

There is nothing to be said for Lake whose sentence was no more than he deserved, but it is certain that he was not haunted by the spectre of his victim. Here are additional facts taken from James's *Naval History*, Vol. IV :

In the summer of 1807, Robert Jeffery, a native of Polperro in Cornwall, aged 18 years, entered on board the *Lord Nelson* privateer of Plymouth . . . was pressed by an officer belonging to the British 18 gun brig-sloop *Recruit*, Captain the Honourable Warwick Lake.

The thefts of which Jeffery was guilty were committed when the crew of the *Recruit* were on short allowance of water:

After he had been thus left to perish by his tyrant of a captain, Jeffery wandered about for eight days, subsisting upon some limpets that he found among the rocks, the crevices of which also afforded him rain-water to drink. He saw several vessels pass, but was too weak to hail them at the distance at which they were. At length, on the morning of the 9th day, the schooner *Adams*, of Marblehead, Massachusetts, John Dennis, master, came to the island, saved the poor fellow from a lingering death, and landed him at Marblehead.

There Jeffery resided, following his trade of a blacksmith, until the summer of 1810, when the noise which his case made in England induced the British Government to send for him home. He was brought first to Halifax, Nova Scotia; and thence . . . to Portsmouth. On the 22nd of October, Jeffery attended at the Admiralty, where he received his discharge, and had the R taken off his name; by which he became entitled to all arrears of pay. The friends of the late (for he had then . . . ceased to bear the title) Captain Lake

made him a liberal compensation for the hardships he had undergone, and Jeffery returned to his native village of Polperro a much richer man than he had quitted it three years before.

The date of the trial of Lake is given as 5th and 6th of February, 1810, not April. The moral of the tale was doubtless digested at the time, as although the Service contained many bullies, this seems to have been a solitary case of marooning.—Yours etc.

A. T. STEWART
COMMANDER, O.B.E., R.N.

THE B.B.C.

(To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY)

SIR,—In your comments on the B.B.C. I notice that you refer to the incongruous jumble of advertisements which are sandwiched between the music that comes from Toulouse.

During a Christmas concert from this same station we had Franck's *Panis Angelicus* followed immediately by a tempting advertisement for *paté de foie gras à la mode bourgeoise*, etc., etc., which could be obtained from Madame So-and-So, Rue So-and-So, etc.

Yours etc.

H. H. PEACH.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES & NEWS

Correspondence from readers on all subjects of bibliographical interest is invited. Our Correspondent will, to the best of his ability, answer all queries addressed to him.

NOTES ON SALES

THE sale of the library of Mr. Jerome D. Kern, which took place during January at the Anderson Galleries in New York, is probably the most important that has yet taken place, so far as the prices of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century books are concerned. I remember some few years ago—perhaps five—hearing Dr. Rosenbach express the opinion that prices, high as they then seemed to many people, had not yet “begun to go up”; and that, for books of really first-rate importance, the standard of prices would eventually be similar to that for pictures. I am not at all sure, now, that he was not perfectly right, and that even the Kern sale, which has raised prices to a level very much higher than they had previously touched, will not, before many years have passed, see its most staggering prices left far behind. But that is for the future to prove, or disprove, and for the present it is quite enough for us to be properly staggered by the shocks that the dispersal of Mr. Kern’s books has given us. I have not yet seen a complete list of the prices fetched, but some of the English newspapers (notably the *Daily Telegraph*) gave fairly long day-to-day cables in which the most striking bids were recorded. One warning must, however, be given. Not a great many copies of the Sale Catalogue have reached England, I think, and a good many people with whom I have talked have not realised the altogether exceptional nature of Mr. Kern’s copies. My friend Mr. Michael Sadleir has been kind enough to lend me his copy of the Catalogue, and a glance at it is enough to show one that, for the purpose of valuing ordinary copies of even very rare books, the Kern prices have, in an enormous number of instances, very little application; for a very high percentage of Mr. Kern’s books were association copies of the greatest interest, proof copies, or—at least—copies whose condition separated them by many pounds from ordinary copies of the same books.

WITH these preliminary remarks, and that warning, let me proceed to record the main facts of this astounding sale. Mr. Kern, who is the well-known composer of *Show-Boat* and many other popular musical plays, has been collecting books for only about ten years, so it is said. He has bought only the very best copies of the very best books of the last two centuries, and has bought them, presumably, at top market price. The Sale Catalogue of his library contains 1482 lots, and, when the sale opened, experienced men said that a total of £200,000 might be reached by them—which, in itself, was probably very much more than Mr. Kern paid for his treasures. In the event the estimate proved very much too low, and the total proceeds of the sale reached the enormous sum of about £346,000. So that I presume that a calculation that Mr. Kern made a profit of £200,000 out of his collection is probably a long way on the low side of the truth. The highest price was £13,600 which was given for Shelley’s own copiously annotated copy of *Queen Mab*, 1813, which the catalogue describes as “without doubt the most valuable and desirable Shelley volume which has ever occurred for sale by auction.” It was formerly in the Buxton Forman collection. Even more remarkable, to my mind, was the £5,800 paid for an uncut copy of Fielding’s *Tom Jones*, 6 volumes, 12mo., in the original boards. Actually,

this was only the fourth highest price of the sale, being exceeded not only by the Shelley mentioned above, but by the manuscripts of Charles Lamb's *Table Book* (£9,600), and of Thomas Hardy's *Pair of Blue Eyes* (£6,800), which Mr. Kern is said to have bought for £600 and £2,000 respectively. But the *Tom Jones* was not a manuscript, and not an association copy; but merely an extraordinarily fine copy of a rare and very great book which is perhaps unique in such good condition; and £5,800 represents the highest price given in the sale for a printed book alone and by far the highest, I think, yet given anywhere for an eighteenth-century book. It is said that Mr. Kern paid about £600 for this *Tom Jones*, and it is interesting to note—as an extreme example of the importance of a book's being uncut—that probably £300 would, six months ago, let us say, have bought, quite easily, the finest imaginable cut copy of *Tom Jones*. Next after this came the manuscript of Pope's *Essay on Man*, with many variants from the printed version, which also fetched £5,800; and then came £5,600, which was given for a set of *Pickwick* in the original parts. This set, which is described as "perfect," was bought at auction only a very few years ago, by Mr. Gabriel Wells, for £700; and the price it now realised was a very large jump on the previous record for *Pickwick*, which was about £3,000. Indeed, almost the only lot that Mr. Kern does not seem to have sold at a profit was the manuscript of Goldsmith's translation of Vida's poem on Chess. This fetched £5,400, which was a drop of a couple of hundred (if I remember right) on what it fetched at auction rather less than a year ago. I might go on recording these prices for many pages, but enough has perhaps been said to show the extraordinary nature of this sale, and the entirely new valuation it has put on really important books and manuscripts. I hope, later on, to be able to see a complete set of prices, for I am eager to find out what happened to the less rare books in the sale. Did they, too, show—in their own less exalted spheres—extraordinary increases in value? So I may, perhaps, revert to this matter at some later time.

NO fewer than sixteen autograph letters of Dr. Johnson's were sold at Messrs. Sotheby's on February 13th. The prices these fetched were remarkable, and were undoubtedly influenced by the prices given for Johnson letters in the Kern sale. The highest price was £1,120, paid by Messrs. Quaritch for the only surviving letter written by Johnson to his wife. This is written on two quarto pages, is dated January 31, 1739-40, and refers to his attempts to sell his tragedy of *Irene*. The price fetched is almost exactly the same as the \$5,500 paid for Mr. Kern's letter addressed by Johnson to Mrs. Thrale and concerned with a criticism of Gray's *Elegy*. Johnson's last letter to Mrs. Thrale, together with Mrs. Thrale's letter to him announcing her marriage to Piozzi, was bought by Messrs. Maggs, in one lot, for £850; eleven years ago these two letters were sold separately by the same auctioneers and brought in a total of £189. Other letters to Mrs. Thrale sold for £110, £118, £135 and £125. A series of eight letters written to George and William Strahan fetched £380 from Messrs. Maggs.

BEFORE these notes appear in print Messrs. Sotheby will have sold (on February 25th and 26th) the third portion of Sir Edmund Gosse's library. I may be able to record some of the more interesting prices in the April number of THE LONDON MERCURY. On March 4th and 5th these auctioneers are to sell a collection of Shakespearean books, Tudor and Stuart literature, etc. A copy of the second folio, 1632, is included. On March 21st and 22nd, there is to be yet another Sotheby sale, the backbone of which is a group of French illustrated books.

ITEMS FROM THE BOOKSHOPS AND CATALOGUES

MESSRS. QUARITCH, of 11 Grafton Street, W.I., have just issued a most interesting and important catalogue of a collection of the publications of the Aldine Press between 1494 and 1595. Out of the 840, or so, editions issued from the Aldine Press during its career of just over a century Messrs. Quaritch have in their collection 538 and also nineteen spurious Aldines, mostly printed at Lyons; in all there are 609 volumes. Ten books are vellum copies and eleven are on large paper, and there are many fine bindings, including some done for Grolier, Laurent, Francis I, and De Thou. One binding is by Roger Payne. The nucleus of the collection (which is offered for £10,000) came from the library of the Earl of Powys, but Messrs. Quaritch have added to the Powys Aldines many volumes, among them some from the Halford collection. One particularly interesting book is Paulus Manutius's own copy of the 1564 octavo edition of Cicero's *Familiar Epistles*, copiously annotated by him (I hope the grammar of this sentence is all right—the annotations are by Paulus Manutius, not by Cicero) and used in the preparation of the edition of 1572.

A catalogue which contains some interesting prices, particularly of nineteenth- and twentieth-century books, is number 164, issued by Messrs. Dulau & Co., of 32 Old Bond Street, W.I. There is, for instance, a first edition, octavo, 1860, of Mrs. Browning's *Poems Before Congress*, for £2 10s.—which interest me specially because I happen to possess a copy of this book (an unopened copy, I grieve to say!) which I picked up for considerably less than Messrs. Dulau's price. As I bought the book, I remember, without knowing anything about it, and on general principles merely, I cannot help feeling gratified that my guess that I was getting it cheaply has proved correct. Then there are two first editions by John Clare, the *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery*, 8vo, 1820, in original boards, for £7 10s., and *The Village Minstrel*, 2 volumes, 8vo., 1821, in a contemporary morocco binding, for £6 6s. Here I feel less pleased, for I sold all my Clares six or eight years ago for, as I remember, about fifteen shillings a-piece. *The Village Minstrel*, was, I know, among them—though not, I fancy, the *Poems*. Had I known what I know now, they would not have gone for fifteen shillings each; but as that represented perhaps 1400%, and certainly 600% or 700%, on what I paid for them before the war, I suppose I ought not to feel aggrieved. Then I notice George Darley's *Sylvia: or, The May Queen, A Lyrical Drama*, first edition, 8vo., 1827, a presentation copy from the author to Charles Lamb's friend, Miss Kelly, for £10. Now, to come down to present-day writers, let us consider for a moment Mr. A. E. Coppard, whose first book, *Adam and Eve and Pinch Me*, 1921, was issued in an edition of 550 copies by the Golden Cockerel Press. A copy of this is priced £5 5s. by Messrs. Dulau, who also offer two limited editions by Mr. Coppard, *Clorinda Walks in Heaven*, 1922, and *Hips and Haws*, 1922, for £4 10s. Each of these two is one of twenty numbered copies in hand-made paper signed by the author. Both were published by the Golden Cockerel Press. Mr. Coppard is, I fancy, one of the very latest additions to the select (and alas! somewhat fluctuating) assembly of "collected" living authors. Another very rare modern book is Mr. Siegfried Sassoon's anonymous *Orpheus in Dilioeryum*, 1908, of which a presentation copy to Sir Edmund Gosse is priced £10; and for a presentation copy of Mr. W. B. Yeats's *The Wanderings of Oisín*, first edition, 1889, £10 10s. is asked.

I HAVE been looking again, also, at the prices of modern books in a list (number 3) which I received three or four months ago from Mr. Norman Colbeck, of Sutton Street, Soho Square, W.I. There are some more of Mrs. Browning's books here, among them *The Seraphim and other Poems*, first edition, 1838, £2 2s.; *Casa Guidi*

Windows, first edition, 1851, £1 10s.; and *Last Poems*, first edition, 1862, 12s. 6d. Of *Casa Guidi Windows*, indeed, there are two copies; the one mentioned above, which has the publishers' catalogue, dated 1851, at the end, and the lettering "London. Chapman & Hall" at the bottom of the spine, and another, without the catalogue, and with different lettering, which is priced £1 1s. I also notice some first editions by Tennyson (who is looking up in the book-collecting world just now). One such is *The Princess*, 1847, at £2 2s. and another is *Maud*, 1855, at 10s. 6d. It is not so long since *Maud* was a book to be found easily enough for a shilling or so; but those days are past and I have recently seen a nice copy priced as high as £1 10s. So Mr. Colbeck's half-guinea copy is very reasonable in price. I venture, indeed, to prophesy that it will not be very long before a really good copy of *Maud* will be worth several guineas.

TO the above prophecy I am in some measure impelled by seeing the latest list (number 252) issued by Messrs. Pickering and Chatto, of 1 King Street, St. James', S.W.I. For in this is offered Sir Edmund Gosse's copy of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, first edition, 1850. This book, of which only a few months ago another copy was priced at £6 6s. (I did not see that copy—but I imagine it was a good one) in an important catalogue, is now listed at £21. And in view of its importance and scarcity in good condition I expect to see it go higher than that eventually.

ANOTHER Tennysonian straw—showing which way the wind is blowing—I found in an American catalogue, the number 6 of the Pegasus Book Shop, Inc., 31 East 60th Street, New York. Here a copy—in only fair condition, if one may judge from the description—of the first edition, 1864, of *Enoch Arden*, with the advertisements dated August, 1864 (they are often dated September, 1864) is priced \$15—in other words about £3, a sum which an English collector would regard (if I may say so) as a trifle on the prophetic side. Incidentally, I may mention that I have noticed one or two typographical differences in various copies of the first edition of *Enoch Arden*, and to these (supposing I can make anything of them) I propose to refer in some future instalment of these notes.

I. A. WILLIAMS

BOOK-PRODUCTION NOTES

QUOUSQUE TANDEM ABUTERE, CATILINA, PATIENTIA NOSTRA? QUAMDIU NOS ETIAM furor iste tuus eludet? Quem ad finem sese effranata jactabit audacia? Nihilne te *nocturnum praesidium palatii*, nihil *urbis vigiliae*, nihil *timor populi*, nihil *consensus bonorum omnium*, nihil hic *munitissimus habendi senatus locus*, nihil *horum ora vultusque* moverunt? Patere tua consilia non sentis? Constrictam jam omnium horum conscientia

THE PASTONCHI TYPE-FACE

THE Lanston Monotype Corporation has issued a wonderfully interesting specimen book, designed by Hans Mardersteig at the Veronese Press of Arnaldo Mondadori and printed at the Officina Bodoni, to show the new Pastonchi letter. This, it may be remembered, takes its name from the Italian poet, Pastonchi, who designed it for the purpose of printing a new and complete edition of Italian classical authors. It was agreed that the new type should be based on Italian tradition, but that it should avoid mere archaism on the one hand and obtrusive modernism on the other. To achieve his aim, Pastonchi,

himself a passionate collector and cultured connoisseur of the books of all ages, began to compile material which was to form the basis of the new type. In this he not only learned from the magnificent Italian works of the fifteenth century, but he also devoted himself to manuscripts, for from these the laws of printing have been evolved. In his studies of manuscripts he compared inscriptions, from the time of the Renaissance and more ancient times, and trained his eye to notice the slightest deviations in one and the same letter, in the consciousness that it is just these imperceptible differences which go so far to make a letter and, in a wider sense, a type beautiful.

We know from the history of other arts besides that of type-founding that the highest achievements are not got by sedulously measuring old monuments with tape-measure and dividers or calipers; and the mere laboured study of old letter might very well have yielded dull and lifeless types. Signor Pastonchi, however, has so well imbued himself with the spirit as well as the letter of his old models that the new type as a whole sparkles with light and life. He has picked up the humanistic tradition and moulded it with complete success to the purposes of modern printing. The generous width and roundness of the letters, the even and careful grading of their strokes and curves, the ample length of the ascenders and descenders, the delicate subordination of the serifs, and the careful modelling of every stamp combine to give us a letter as clear to read as it is beautiful both in mass and in detail. In designing type it is generally the lower-case alphabet which presents the greater difficulty; but the Pastonchi lower-case letters are even better than the capitals, which, especially

when seen in the mass, have a machine-like precision which makes them by comparison just a little dull. For much the same reason the italic is a little less pleasing than the roman. By the kindness of the Lanston Monotype Corporation I am able to give here a specimen setting in the 16-point size, which is big enough to show the characteristic detail. But I like the smaller sizes, and especially the 12-point, even better.

A HALCYON PRESS BLAKE

THE HALCYON PRESS of Maastricht in Holland has issued a little octavo edition of William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, printed in the Lutetia type, designed for the ancient and eminent firm of Enschedé en Zonen by Van Krimpen. It is a well-designed roman letter, rather more removed from the humanistic tradition than the Pastonchi, which in the upright form I prefer to it. The Lutetia italic, on the other hand, which is rather like the now famous Blado of the Monotype in weight, and in its narrow set and angularity, is, I think, a prettier letter than the italic form of the Pastonchi.

A SPECIMEN BOOK OF FELL'S TYPES

THE types presented by Dr. Fell to Oxford University figure so honourably in the history of English printing and specially in its modern revival that special interest attaches to the first specimen book, "Printed at the THEATRE A.D. 1693." Messrs. Tregaskis of Great Russell Street have printed in a limited edition a colotype facsimile of a copy in their possession. Their copy is unique in having appended to it a leaf advertising the books printed at the Oxford Press in 1694. The types shown range from great capital letters an inch high down to "Non-periel Roman." "English," or Black Letter, type is shown in four sizes, "English English," "New English English," "Pica English" and "Long Primer English." Some adventurous private press might do worse than revive for its own books the fine old English black letter which became the national type in the days of Wynkin de Worde and Pynson. Both Caslons and Stephenson and Blake, I believe, still have punches of it dating from the eighteenth century, or perhaps even earlier.

BEN JONSON'S ENGLISH GRAMMAR

THE English Grammar, "made by BEN JONSON for the Benefit of All Strangers Out of His Observation of the English Language Now Spoken and in Use," which was first published in the 1640-41 folio of Jonson's Works, has been printed by the Lanston Monotype Corporation in their 10-point Poliphilus type and its companion Blado italic. The text has been edited by that scholarly bookman, Mr. Strickland Gibson, who with the help of his wide knowledge of ancient bookbinding has been able to devise for this reprint a case that is both durable and comely. The limp boards are covered with strong vellum-like paper and stamped blind with a rectilinear pattern. The edges are turned at the fore-edge. Mr. Gibson designed a similar cover some years ago for the series of Tudor and Stuart Reprints issued from the Oxford University Press. I know from my own hard and constant use of a volume in that series how well this light and simple binding stands wear.

B. H. NEWDIGATE

CHRONICLES

THE DRAMA

THE LOVELORN LADY. By FREDERICK JACKSON. Wyndham's Theatre.

BYRON. By ALICIA RAMSEY. Lyric Theatre.

FASHION. By MRS. MOWATT. The Gate Theatre.

BEAU GESTE. By BASIL DEAN and CHARLTON MANN. His Majesty's Theatre.

AN epidemic, with high mortality figures, seems to be attacking once again the London Theatres. Pernicious anaemia is probably the correct name for it, but whatever the technical term may be, the symptoms and results are easily described. Pale, shadowy plays emerge from the limbo of managerial optimism, run for a week or so and then vanish before these pages are even sent to the printers, leaving everyone a little bewildered at their transience and more than a little puzzled why they were ever allowed to exist at all.

The Lovelorn Lady was a bad play. It was dull, it dragged, it had no shape or sparkle. In these modern days of freedom when there are authorities with power to forbid pretty nearly anything, it ought not to be very difficult to find someone who is officially entitled to forbid playwrights from making character A read aloud, in full, to character B a letter which A received from B the day before. The whole machinery of *The Lovelorn Lady* creaked and groaned wearily.

Miss Olive Sloane acted well, but easily the most important acting was that of Mr. Francis Lister, newly returned from America and Australia. Mr. Lister went away a talented and skilful actor; he has come back with a sure touch, a strength and an easy confidence that will take him to the very top of his tree. Mr. Lister is an actor whose career is worth watching. The rest of the acting was as deplorable as it was disappointing, and it is more charitable to pass on to the second of the two mystery-plays of the month. The mystery about *Byron* is probably insoluble. Why anyone wrote it, why anyone put it on the stage, why anyone thought it could possibly succeed, the answers to all these are locked for ever in the inscrutable and comparatively anonymous bosoms of Messrs. Gwep Limited, who presented the play.

There are many ways in which *Byron* could be put into a play. The man had sufficient picturesqueness and his character had enough facets to make several plays. Miss Ramsey's object seems to have been to show that *Byron* was a ladies' man and that the ladies of the period were more than ordinarily silly. Perhaps he was, and perhaps they were, but there ought to be more than that in a three-act play (with an epilogue). Mr. Esmé Percy worked away like the industrious and versatile actor that he is, trying hard to transfuse a little red blood into an anaemic and fast-failing patient, and Miss Dorothy Cheston was good as Miss Annabelle Milbanke but, for the rest, they were overweighted by the burden they were trying to carry.

The Gate Theatre did an interesting thing when it revived Mrs. Mowatt's comedy *Fashion or Life in New York*. It was written in 1845 and produced in London in 1850 at the long-defunct Olympic Theatre, the last performers in which, by the way, are recorded to have been "a troupe of midgets at very low prices."

Fashion is a burlesque of life in New York and, from all accounts, life in certain circles in that city is not unlike in 1929 what it was in 1845. Mrs. Tiffany, "a lady who imagines herself fashionable," is taken in by the pretensions of Count Jolimaitre, an importation from Europe who ultimately turns out to be a barber. It is an incident which occasionally happens even in this century. We also have our Mr. Tennyson Twinkles, "the modern poets," and our Mr. Augustus Foggs, "the drawing-room appendages." The plot is simple and one that is, and always has been, a universal favourite. Everything goes wrong with everyone except the villain, who prospers exceedingly; lovers get to cross-purposes, snobbery triumphs, mortgages are about to be foreclosed, when, suddenly, everything is put right by the intervention of the rich and benevolent farmer from a place with the really capital name of Catteraugus. and the curtain descends on radiant, all-round contentment.

The Gate Theatre showed enterprise and knowledge when it rescued *Fashion* from obscurity. But it was a pity that the producer decided to burlesque it. The play itself is a burlesque of a certain social set in America, and it ought to have been played in a perfectly straightforward way. Instead of that, Mr. Godfrey has produced it as if it was a skit on itself. Everything is exaggerated and made slightly ridiculous. For instance, Mrs. Tiffany's make-up and her talking and walking are so absurd that they cease to be a burlesque on anything in real life, and they only remind the audience of Miss Elizabeth Pollock imitating Miss Thorndike's imitation of Hecuba. Only one member of the cast understood that a second burlesque was not wanted, and played throughout with really admirable sincerity, and that was Miss Viola Lyel as "Gertrude, the Governess." Miss Lyel took the part exactly as it was, presumably, intended to be taken in 1845, and her straightforward acting made the stiltedness and exaggerating of the others look rather absurd. Nevertheless Mr. Godfrey and the management of the Gate deserve praise for ever putting *Fashion* on at all. The conservatory scene, designed by Mr. McKnight Kauffer, was more like a conservatory of 1945 than 1845, and was an utterly anachronistic bit of scenery.

Beau Geste is famous as a book and a film, and is now trying its luck as a play. It makes an odd play, a jumble of scenes and episodes, some dull, some rather exciting, some spectacular and all disconnected. The play has developed into a cross between the book and the film. It begins with the theft of the famous gem, but there is some slight obscurity about the identity of the thief, about the part the Chaplain played, most of all about the motive which inspired the Geste Bros. to feel that their only honourable and chivalrous course of action was instantly to enlist in the French Foreign Legion. It is natural to suppose that such a very violent transition from English country life would only be undertaken for some very exceptional reason; in the play the reason is a little bald and unconvincing.

Once aboard the Legion, so to speak, the film-spirit takes charge, and we have a varied kaleidoscope of life in that much-advertised corps. The parade ground, on which conversation is carried on in English and orders are given in French (a procedure which must puzzle recruits), the canteen, the barrack-room, in which there is the remarkable spectacle of pretty nearly the whole of the French Army of Africa in its underclothes, the Fort, the Oasis, and so on, all the reels are there. In the intervals there was an occasional March of the Legion, in which even the most devoted female admirer of the regiment could not maintain that the ranks kept in step or in good dressing. The Straggle of the Legion would have been a more appropriate name for it. The battle for the Fort was well done and was most dramatic, the villainous but gallant Adjudant Lejaune fully maintaining his reputation as a soldier by his demoniacal energy, and his reputation as a scoundrel by his equally demoniacal laughter.

The performance on the first night lasted for four hours and then was only cut short by the professional enthusiasm of the theatre's fireman, who mistook the "Viking's funeral" of Beau Geste for the real thing and lowered the Safety Curtain. Since then, the piece has been reduced to more manageable dimensions and must have gained in the process. The acting was energetic and capable, but the stage is too big, and the number of Legionaries too enormous, to allow individuals to exert their personality. Poor Mr. Laurence Olivier! His acting as Captain Stanhope in *Journey's End* at the Stage Society was so brilliant that Mr. Dean at once secured him for *Beau Geste*. And now Mr. Colin Clive is Captain Stanhope at the Savoy, while Mr. Olivier struggles nightly to free himself, body and soul, from the throng of soldiers who swarm like locusts on the vast stage of His Majesty's, and from the insipid and pedestrian words that he has to utter. Mr. Edmund Willard is exceedingly good as the Adjutant. It is a capital part, with plenty of opportunity for Mr. Willard's talents. Mr. Dennis Wyndham has little to say but says it well. He has a slightly irritating trick of moving his hands incessantly as if he were sparring up to a pugilistic opponent. Mr. Robin Irvine and Mr. Jack Hawkins are made for better things than the overdone fraternity of the two lesser Gestes.

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

An attack of pernicious anaemia in the theatre-world is, of course, the signal for a great outburst of managerial activity. When a play that appeared absolutely certain to run for three hundred nights is hastily withdrawn after the tenth performance, something has got to be provided quickly to take its place.

Mr. Ernest Milton, having opened his season rather ambitiously with a Pirandello, is now producing a play by his wife, entitled *Maestro, Darling!* in which he himself takes the part of a Continental dancer. The first Soviet play to be put on in England is making its first appearance at the Little Theatre on the last day of February. It is called *Red Rust*, and the cast includes Mr. Ion Swinley and Mr. John Gielgud.

Mr. Fred Terry, forsaking for a time *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, is appearing in a new romantic play called *The Borderer*. He is to play the Earl of Bothwell to Miss Julia Neilson's Mary Queen of Scots.

A new musical comedy, *The White Camellia*, affords Mr. Harry Welchman an opportunity to return to Daly's.

Then there is to be a revival of Mr. Shaw's *Major Barbara* at Wyndham's. Miss Sybil Thorndike, Mr. Baliol Holloway and Mr. Lewis Casson will be in the company, while Mr. Charles Macdonald is running a series of Mr. Shaw's plays during March, at the Embassy Theatre, beginning with *Pygmalion*.

Sir Nigel Playfair is going to produce in April a new version of Offenbach's light opera, *La Vie Parisienne*, the libretto of which has been entirely re-written by Mr. A. P. Herbert. The interval at the Lyric between the going west (literally, not colloquially) of *A Hundred Years Old* is to be filled with a short revival of *The Beggar's Opera*, with Mr. Frederick Ranalow once again.

The Arts Theatre is going to produce *The Tidings brought to Mary*, by Paul Claudel.

A. G. MACDONELL

ARCHITECTURE

PUBLICATIONS

THE GOTHIC REVIVAL. By KENNETH CLARK. Constable. 21s.

NOT very long ago I enjoyed reviewing Mr. Christopher Hussey's book, *The Picturesque*. Before reading it most of us would have believed that we knew about the origin and development of the idea which this word expresses, but we found we were mistaken. So also there are few who would not be prepared to tell to a student of art the story of the Gothic revival. We should speak with confidence, yet we should almost certainly omit much that is of interest and some things that are important. Mr. Clark has done for the architecture of the Gothic revival as much as Mr. Hussey did for the story of *The Picturesque*. He has a full knowledge of the literature of the period, and of the varying theories that underlay this architecture, and he has made such appropriate extracts from such numbers of letters, pamphlets, and books that when we have read his book we are left with a sense that we have also read most of that which has been written. The book, too, is well balanced, no one period, individual or event is overstressed, and when portraits of particular persons are drawn in full they are used to symbolize the thought of a school, or a decade, as well as because they are interesting in themselves.

Mr. Clark begins his book as we should have done. He discusses a question that is still often argued to-day, namely, whether the traditional Gothic way of building ever died in this country, and in illustration of his conclusions he refers to many buildings which grew under its influence in the seventeenth and even in the eighteenth centuries. Few would not acknowledge these buildings to be more the last evidences of an old tradition than of a consciously revived art. To me, however, it is certain that the popular title of the architecture of which he writes is correctly given—the Gothic *revival*. Yet it must be acknowledged he has added considerably to the evidence that the old tradition was not yet dead when the revival had begun. Though Mr. Clark mentions many, he makes no attempt to give a list of these late Gothic buildings, which the members of any school field-club would take to be mediaeval. It yet remains for some enthusiastic student of the period to make this schedule. Others will be able to add to his their own favourite examples.

For myself, the two outstanding buildings of this type are the church at Staunton Harold in Leicestershire, which dates from the Commonwealth, and that at Low Ham in Somerset, which was built in the fourth decade of the seventeenth century. Both these churches are typical of English Gothic, both would at first sight be dated from a century at least two hundred years earlier than that in which they were built. So strongly did the tradition last that the coloured and gilded oak screen which divides the chancel from the nave at Low Ham Church might be taken to have been made by a joiner before the day when Henry the Eighth denied the authority of the Pope in England. An excellent example of this kind is to be seen at East Grinstead. Few people driving through this town to Lewes would think that the massive and tall tower that shows as a land mark for many miles around was built in 1789, yet Mr. Clark notes that it was so. By almost everyone it would be assumed that mediaeval masons worked and set the stones which gave it strength, height and distinction. These examples and, I think, even the last, have a traditional rather than a revival origin, for to the making of them there was brought little or no archaeological learning.

The folk who ordered these works and those who laboured to their finishing thought in the Gothic manner by reason of their upbringing. The first evidences of true revival are traced by Mr. Clark to nearly the same sources as were those of *The Picturesque* by Mr. Hussey. The romantic massing of the country houses designed by the architect Vanbrugh are classed by our author as being inspired by a conscious pleasure in the grouping of Gothic. But whereas Vanbrugh enjoyed romantic or Gothic massing, the next generation saw the productions of Batty Langley whose custom it was to apply a fancy Gothic form to contemporary planning. In the year 1742 Mr. Langley published a book with a name beginning *Gothic architecture improved*. The archaeological writings of Gray and Warton are contemporary with the material attempts of Horace Walpole, and there is evidence that before Strawberry Hill was Gothicized the fashion was to build summerhouses, gazebos and garden temples in the Gothic manner. Walpole crystallized a fashion rather than inspired it. It was then that the Gothic revival began in truth, when the designer's mind was concentrated on the general use of decorative forms suggestive of the mediaeval builder's art. Dabblers in the Gothic manner grew proud with greater knowledge, though even yet that knowledge was small. It became a principle that only those forms for which ancient precedent could be shewn should be used. But all the time and, indeed, right through the Gothic revival those who adopted the manner found a deep reality persistently opposed to them, the reality that was the building economy of the day. There are still some who uphold the merits of the Gothic revival in this sense, but for the most part, few of the great-grandsons of Horace Walpole's generation, while they smile at his efforts of this kind, themselves attempt to revive the old manner of building, a manner which was rooted in the changing economic forces under which lived the ancient master-builders.

James Wyatt, who was the first Gothic architect to prosper as a professional adherent of this manner, deserves as much fame as a skilful architect as he has notoriety for his ill-treatment of ancient buildings. There is a suggestion in this book that he may yet get the appreciation that is his due. Like Sir Giles Gilbert Scott at Liverpool Cathedral and again at the Charterhouse Chapel, Wyatt designed Gothic buildings in accord with the general feel of the style, and not as did those who practised after the former and before the latter. In that interval men were satisfied if each feature, as well as the complete form, was derived correctly from examples built in any quarter of the four centuries when the then-nameless style was growing naturally. Wyatt worked to get romance and the general sense of mediaeval building, using the current means of his day, whereas Sir Giles designs to the same end, employing, in more academic manner, the structural system of long dead builders.

Walpole and Gray saw little good in the works of Batty Langley. Wyatt believed he did better Gothic than they and, in his turn, has been fiercely condemned by Pugin and his followers. Pugin's hard and studied architecture was ridiculed by his successors whose work is now for the most part condemned as dull and lifeless. We are led to wonder how any architects are left to-day willing to try their hands with a sure confidence of success in the art of revival. Yet at the moment there are architects who again argue that their own greater knowledge will ensure success when they attempt the restoration of a broken screen or build a church in the style that our economic life forbids. The story of revival is the story of failure. Like the achievement of the dog drilled to handle a toy rifle, it is not the merit of the performance but the fact that the act is somehow accomplished that causes wonder.

A person who knows anything of the Gothic revival visualizes a certain type of building when he hears the name Pugin spoken. He connects him with the Houses of

Parliament. But few go further and trouble to read his books or visit his buildings. Nor do they know anything of his strenuous life or vital personality. These are described by Mr. Clark and the reader will, as a result, surely determine to take the first opportunity to examine "the Contrasts", and to read *The True Principles of Gothic Architecture*. Doing so he will be surprised to find that it is Pugin who was responsible for the doctrine: "Architectural skill consists in embodying and exposing the structure requirements and not in disguising it by borrowed feathers." And though Pugin laboured to reproduce the atmosphere and sense of ancient architecture, he would seem, in his writing, to deny the possibility of success, for to what other purpose is the implication directed which underlies his written word? "The History of architecture is the History of the world"? Readers of Pugin will note also that, like Oscar Wilde, he took delight in stringing together coloured words: "The stoups are filled to the brim; the rood is raised on high; the lamps of the sanctuary burn bright; the saintly portraiture in glass windows shine all-gloriously; and the albs hang in oaken ambries, and the cope chests are filled with orphreyed bandekins; the pix and the pax are there, and the thurible and cross." Mr. Clark tells the old story of the dispute which Pugin's son carried on with Sir Charles Barry about the authorship of the Parliament buildings. It is his son, also, who claimed for him the title of Art Architect of that work. Pugin himself said, "I could not have made the plan, it was Barry's own; he was good at such work—excellent . . ." The author of our book tells us straightly, "That every inch of the great building's surface inside and out was designed by one man: every panel, every wall paper, every chair sprang from Pugin's brain, and his last days were spent in designing ink-pots and umbrella-stands." That Pugin was a great man is the verdict of our age, and none the less great does he appear for his words, "I have passed my life" (he died at the age of forty) "in thinking fine things, studying fine things, designing fine things and realizing very poor ones." We recognize too well the truth of that last sigh.

Besides Pugin, Mr. Clark takes Ruskin and Sir Gilbert Scott as typifying the men who influenced and worked in the spirit of this great architectural revival, and devotes to each a chapter of some twenty-five pages. He ends his book with an epilogue wherein occur these words, "Because they believed so uncompromisingly in the value of Gothic forms, the revivalists could never produce agreeable architecture. Yet it is this very conviction that makes the Gothic revival so interesting."

A book on the subject was needed. It was a difficult one to write. The author has done very well with the space at his disposal. The illustrations are well chosen—they number nineteen. I should have liked more of them so that one could have seen the development of this mannered building begin, grow, and spread its branches, branches which even now bear fruit rosy-red but seedless.

A. R. POWYS

THE FINE ARTS

THE LONDON GROUP. Burlington Galleries.

PAINTINGS BY DUNCAN GRANT. Paul Guillaume Gallery.

PAINTINGS BY JACK B. YEATS. Alpine Club Gallery.

I HAPPENED to visit the London Group in the company of a friend, Mr. X, who cherishes a not unfamiliar hostility to what he imagines to be modern painting. I suspect that we were both anticipating with a certain shrinking that temporary cooling off of friendly relations which active instead of dormant disagreement in taste inevitably engenders, however much one may assure oneself that it makes no difference. For active disagreement means an attempt to agree, and the whole personality is temporarily concentrated on the task which is not, of course—as is often alleged—always a hopeless one. Mr. X likes modern music. That, I felt was a happy augury. For there are analogies between the two arts.

The first painting that arrested us was a nice landscape by Porter and we both admired it. But, added Mr. X, that is quite ordinary and conventional, there is nothing at all "modern" about it. I began to grasp the situation and asserted that on the other hand, it was among the most modern — couldn't he see that the colour harmonies in which the beauty of the painting lay were as unlike the old harmonies as the new musical harmonies (sometimes called discords) are to the old? Generally the painting was in line with tradition, to which however it added a new note of colour, and that too was right, for all the great "traditional" artists were themselves originators. However, he hardly listened, and as we went round the gallery I found that the pictures which really seemed to interest him were the comparatively few cubist or distortionist works. These he did not want to admire, but to hate. That was what he had come for and he kept on asking me: "Now what do you think can possibly be the meaning of that inflated figure, that maze of angles and conglomerated segments of objects?" I replied that they had no meaning, that it was waste of good time to look for one, that that kind of thing was out of date, a twenty-year-old fallacy and that the really modern works were quite different, what he (by an odd paradox identifying himself with the pseudo-moderns) insisted on calling "conventional." And under protest I guided him towards Mr. Mark Gertler's *Sleeping Girl*, one of that artist's most successful figure paintings, dominating the wall with the rich, aromatic colour and supple modelling of form. "But that," he said, with a note of admiration, might be shown in the Academy. "It ought to," I replied. Hastily he turned to a figure painting by Mr. Matthew Smith—one of Mr. Smith's most sketchy works favouring largeness of form and experimenting in sombre, though glowing shades of red, somewhat irrespective of representational colouring. I agreed with his doubt as to significance, although not because the work was sketchy or about a fat model—but I pointed out a flower piece by Mr. Matthew Smith which was a fine piece of colour orchestration. It seemed, however, too fluid in its brush work drawing to meet with appreciation: but of course that is not a peculiarly modern trait. No painting can give every detail (an infinite quantity) and any measure of so-called simplification is justifiable, provided it is not merely for the sake of simplifying. What is needed is that the artist should give just the description he desires and no more. I tried to explain this, but without much success, and this very different painting was condemned as in the same box with the cubist and distortionist works. This failure

however, was atoned for by the unqualified admiration expressed for Mr. Duncan Grant's picture of a room with an open window and a radiant sunlit view. It is among his most important works, and that is saying a great deal. At the very mention of Mr. Grant's name academicians see red, yet here was a lover of "conventional" art irresistibly drawn by the appeal of Mr. Grant's brilliant sunlight effect. Mr. Grant's poignant colour harmonies belong to the most beautiful creations of modern English painting, and when he combines this superb lyricism with a passionate description of a familiar scene he produces something which possesses a universal appeal. Mr. X, however, was still dissatisfied and he passed immediately to one of Mr. Matthew Smith's more doubtful nudes, disliking it intensely. Burlington Galleries, where the exhibition was held, is at the back of Burlington House and the great exhibition of Dutch paintings was just opening. "I suppose," remarked Mr. X, as we left the Galleries, "that as an admirer of modern painting you have no interest in the old Dutch masters with their mellow tones!"

One of the Parisian picture dealer princes, M. Paul Guillaume has invaded London, opening in partnership with Mr. Brandon Davis a magnificent gallery at 7 Grosvenor Street, which exhales the same muffled and palatial and at the same time thrilling atmosphere as the Parisian galleries. The premises of our rich London dealers in antiques are luxuriously plush-covered, but musty and depressing. These modern Parisian dealers also display American wealth and spaciousness, and their wealth, it is true, has largely come from the sale of the works of the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists who lived and died in comparative poverty: but this wealth is being used for a good purpose—to promote living painting and it is the sense of this fact which gives to these galleries their mysterious and fascinating character. The opening exhibition of paintings by Renoir has been wisely followed by a comprehensive exhibition of paintings by an English artist, Mr. Duncan Grant, which affords a survey of the whole of the work of the artist. Mr. Grant has not only already achieved a very considerable reputation, his paintings are also rapidly snapped up by collectors; yet to the larger public his name is completely unknown. Perhaps it will remain so for this generation. Yet I feel certain that he is destined to take a very high place in English painting. Mr. Clive Bell's courageous acclamation of Mr. Grant some eight years ago was no idle exaggeration, but based on sound judgment. The mistake he made was to qualify it later by stating that of course Mr. Grant was not the equal of French artists such as Matisse and Picasso. In my view Mr. Grant is more important than these painters, and while I think that the reputation of all contemporary French painters (including even de Segonzac, Utrillo, and Bonnard) will decline, that of Duncan Grant and other contemporary English painters will grow. American collectors will be well advised to pay more attention to modern English painting than they have hitherto done. Immense sums are paid for an indifferent Matisse, while a Grant with more sterling qualities can be obtained for less than three figures. And Grant's reputation will centre round his qualities as a colourist. That may sound as though we could admire his pictures as a sort of wall-paper or specimen of house-painting, abstracting the colour and appreciating that alone. But anyone who really loves pictures for themselves and not for the sake of erecting some theory, knows that it is always the whole concrete thing that is loved, although one aspect, such as the colour, may be singled out as containing the expressive emphasis. Grant's landscapes are real landscapes and the beauty of their colour would not be the same thing if torn away from the emotion within the landscape. Similarly with the flower pieces and figure studies. Nor can his work be tied to a single label, for he is peculiarly receptive of new influences and versatile in experiment. Looking round at his

paintings one is impressed by the variety of treatment and conception: each painting presents an individual problem with its individual solution. Yet labels do help as a guide and, broadly speaking, the earlier paintings, after the Cézanne influence had been assimilated, are lower in tone and more sensuous in feeling; then there is a movement away from colour to less sensuous and more reflective studies stressing tone, and the influence of Sickert is evident in the Venetian paintings and that sombre group of women in a street; and recently colour has flamed up again, but in a higher key and more strident. The mood is no longer sensuous but has, so to speak, an edge to it, is piquant and vital and extraordinarily intense. The same quality can be felt in the treatment of such widely different themes as that of the large ballet composition and a brilliant flower piece. There is a strangely close analogy between this emotional quality and that of some of the phrases of modern music.

Mr. Jack Yeats has developed from an illustrator into a genuine painter, and he is a painter of Ireland and Irish people. His earlier work, illustrating with a touch of satire and also of impressionist romance scenes of everyday Irish life, was always interesting, but contained a crude journalistic element. Neither the satire nor the romance was completely and freely seen. Mr. Yeats has now, mainly in his landscapes, almost got what he was really driving at. Formerly he drew in tones, now he draws in colour, splashed on with a palette knife, high-keyed, rich and varied, admirably descriptive of the enticing atmospheric fluidity of Irish scenery. He is at his best in studies such as *Porter Boats* and *Auction Fine Mart*, in the latter of which he has effectively realised that he is not interested so much in the character of individual people as in the mood or impression of a person or group.

HOWARD HANNAY

POETRY

COLLECTED POEMS. By A. E. COPPARD. Cape. 5s.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS. Secker. 10s. 6d.

AN ANTHOLOGY OF "NINETIES" VERSE. Edited with an Introduction by A. J. A. SYMONS. Elkin Mathews & Marrot. 7s. 6d.

THE POETRY OF JOHN BANISTER TABB. Edited by FRANCIS A. LITZ. Lane. 8s. 6d.

THIS complete collection of Mr. Coppard's verse supplies a real need, for not many of his admirers can have been either quick or rich enough to get anywhere near his separate collections. Regarded as poetry, it is on the whole a disappointment. Mr. Coppard who, when he chooses, can fill a whisper, or even a nudge, in his stories, with poetical intensity, turns out to be a different man altogether when he stands up and wrestles for his own meaning. The good things in the book have all a bearing on his fiction. They are finely-worded, if hardly "musical," notes for possible stories, thumb-nail sketches of people and scenes, and third-person records of usable emotions. The full-length, deliberate lyrics, which are in the majority, are undistinguished compared with these.

It would appear that, for all his power over words, Mr. Coppard is a victim of duality. He is a writer of that rare kind whose fictions are complete in themselves, and have no feelers straying into reality for nutriment or consolation. His imagination does not move for choice in the world which, with the rest of us, he inhabits but in another, singularly like it in externals, but on an infinitely reduced scale and with a causality all its own—or rather, his own. He may be pictured as watching over a microcosm in which dapper little people experience odd, diminished emotions, brooding intensely but dispassionately, as a boy broods over the purposes of ants; and as throwing situations in the way of his people, withholding their handsaws, and tantalising them with the train for Rome, much as the boy disposes pebbles and twigs to upset the minor geography of the garden-path. There is a little of everything in that other world of his, from a tiny London suburb, to a stretch, a yard long, of English counties. There is even a Beyond to it, where people disappear, and from which ghosts, as occasion arises, issue and walk. Above all, it is full of an implicit poetry, so full that one would never be in the least taken aback if his Mr. Beamish or his Uncle Vole should step forward and set its echoes ringing with an exquisite odd little song. But there is no Mr. Coppard in it, because it is in him. And it is of the strange, unfamiliar world, the world which he inhabits, that he sings.

Of course, by stretching a few points, it is possible to escape from the worst disadvantages of a duality of the kind. Song has, before now, proceeded in great quantities from a closed and private cosmos. With a little inconvenience, one may even contrive or select a fictitious creature and bring him into the larger world to be one's laureate. There is a contemporary instance of this extreme method in France, where M. Valéry Larbaud, possessing an acutely critical mind which cannot bear to be detected hesitating in the face of any duality, has been in the habit of carrying his millionaire Barnabooth about with him on the railway, when in the mood for verse. But Mr. Coppard, like a true Briton, will not, or cannot, sing through a dummy like a ventriloquist. He sings because he must, and insists on interpreting his own reality

in his own person. Accordingly his successes seem to occur, almost without his consent, when he meets with actual events or things which either remind him of his place apart, or else have a sufficient fabulous tinge to seem worth translating to it. This is how a very successful poem begins :

I had an old man to my friend
Who gave me, at December's end,
Twelve chosen apples, fresh as dew :
' A Christmas gift I bring to you.'

It will be observed that the case is a trifle odd and other-worldly. Another success is about an unseen eclipse of the moon, and another, perhaps the most successful, is about an old man, an innkeeper, who is nothing and does nothing except just carry on his business. On the other hand, this is a piece from the end of a much more typical poem :

Honied is the heart of the orchard
Loosening its tired blooms :
Their flakes of silence fall
Like the delicate feet of dreams
They leave a magical sweetness in the world.
The flag's wide lips are locked ;
The breasts are cold
Of dissolute roses dying in the briar.

Now the shower fades on the breeze, the night fulfills
With sharp unwrinkled stars.
Come moon, loving moon, behind your secret hill
Wounding with white wonder the attentive sky.

That passage, with its stimulated sensibility almost effacing its real charm, is typical of three-quarters of the book. There is a great deal more about breasts and sweetness in other places, and more than a mention of " wounded nights," " larks speaking close to heaven," and " malignant altars." The accents are familiar, and so are the topics. Whose larks were they that, belated, twittered in a quiet sky ; whose malignant altars were strewn with bruised and sinful, if not dissolute flowers ?

Even if Lord Alfred Douglas and Mr. Symons were not here to remind us, we should, I think, recognise it as the voice of the ' nineties,' although why that honied ghost should choose Mr. Coppard as a reed through which to blow, and at this late hour, is a profound mystery. Mr. Symons and Lord Alfred remind us by their presence that it never had much luck—at least in England. I do not think that it ever found the ideal instrument here—the possessor of a mind volatile enough to follow his nerves into every emotion that offered, and stay there, thrilling with pleasure and quite unvexed by self-criticism, so long as the nerves held out. Perhaps it was at its happiest with Ernest Dowson until it had used him up. It tried many better poets, but it could not prevent them from interposing notes of their own and twisting its tunes awry. John Davidson and Lionel Johnson, it must have found great trials, while Francis Thompson must have simply terrified it. Nothing, indeed, is more striking in Mr. Symons' little yellow book than the way in which his selected authors, with five central exceptions, simply would not keep to the necessary decadent point. Wilde is the sun of his system and Dowson is its Mercury with, next to him, on close orbits, Richard Le Gallienne and Arthur Symons and Lord Alfred Douglas. Well outside these, and beyond the minors, who keep together for lack of conviction, the others move, widely separated, with " Michael Field," Johnson and Davidson

at the rim, and Francis Thompson, W. B. Yeats and Laurence Housman hardly aware of the central gravitation and already preparing to swing out of the system. Beardsley has a cometary track, writing in one stanza at the very hub of the movement and, in another, producing this sort of thing, worlds away :

Along the path that skirts the wood,
The three musicians wend their way,
Pleased with their thoughts, each other's mood,
Franz Himmel's latest roundelay,
The morning's work, a new-found theme, their breakfast and the
summer day.

One's a soprano, lightly frocked
In cool, white muslin that just shows
Her brown silk stockings gaily clocked,
Plump arms and elbows tipped with rose,
And frills of petticoats and things, and outlines as the warm wind
blows.

No other writers in Mr. Symons' collection attain that Mozartian clarity, not even the "outer six" (or does "Michael Field" count as two?) at their clearest. As for the rest one ordinarily hears their melodies coming faintly and familiarly through the worn images and invocations with the qualified kind of enjoyment with which one might listen to the usual Chopin nocturne being played in a hall full of wool.

The serious verse of Lord Alfred Douglas is particularly liable to affect the reader in that way. It is obviously sincere, every word of it, and deeply felt, and it is by no means unmusical; but it is incorrigibly woolly except when it is bitter. Curiously enough, his non-serious verse shows nothing of that defect—perhaps because it is, in its essence, a kind of crystalline bitterness.

I do not know if there is any significance in the fact that although Father Tabb was born in 1845, he had not written more than a dozen poems until he was nearly fifty. Can it be that the rumour of the 'nineties' penetrated to him at his cathedral at Maryland, U.S.A., and set him wondering why Aphrodite should have all the good tunes? Certainly most of his little poems are sweetly cloying out of all proportion to the purity of their intent. Dr. Litz's collection runs to 500 pages, and might, with advantage have been 400 pages shorter. Father Tabb was a genuine poet, but, like so many religious poets before him, his conceits were apt to run wild. He could write of the Redeemer :

A little Boy of heavenly birth,
But far from home to-day,
Comes down to find His ball, the earth,
That sin has cast away.
O comrades, let us one and all
Join in to get Him back his ball.

I think that he pulls it off there, although he comes perilously near the hymnology of the Salvation Army. At all events nobody who does not like that a little will like him at all.

E. G. TWITCHETT

FICTION

EXPIATION. By the Author of *Elizabeth and Her German Garden*. Macmillan. 7s. 6d.

ACCIDENT. By ARNOLD BENNETT. Cassell. 7s. 6d.

THE LAST SEPTEMBER. By ELIZABETH BOWEN. Constable. 7s. 6d.

BROWN ON RESOLUTION. By C. S. FORESTER. Lane. 7s. 6d.

THE DEATH OF LAURENCE VINING. By ALAN THOMAS. Benn. 7s. 6d.

CORPSE ON THE MAT. By MILWARD KENNEDY. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

IT is no disrespect, I hope, to the authors of the first two books on this list to call them veteran novelists. They have both been at this business for a very long time and they both know what they can do and what they cannot do. One might almost say that they both know a little too well what they can do, but this applies less to Lady Russell (who is "the Author of *Elizabeth and Her German Garden*") than to Mr. Bennett. Mr. Bennett is intolerably sure of his power to fill page after page in an interesting way. He sends two of his characters down the *train de luxe* after they have been sitting late in the dining-car :

The shaking, clattering, linked platforms between the coaches, with their striped curtains which so flimsily hid the glimpses of the world that the train was for ever leaving behind and for ever rushing to meet, were deserted, precarious bridges over hell. There was a profound nocturnal silence and stillness in the midst of the deafening eternal racket and motion.

But the unseen guardians of the train were watchful. A small red light burned its signal at the end of a corridor. In a glass-covered box on a wall could be seen tools ready for life-saving use in case of accident. On the attendant's seat at the same end of the corridor lay a bag and a portfolio of yellow and salmon-tinted forms ; also an official cap.

It reminds one, in the attention to detail which produces inexplicably a brooding sense of significance, of the contemporary subjects which the Pre-Raphaelites sometimes consented to paint. Mr. Bennett can do it most admirably. In this book he does it rather too well. All the circumstances of the journey towards the South, as it is made by the rich and the moderately rich, are recorded with a vividness which utterly swamps the people who are making the journey. They move but palely before this highly coloured background, so that the story Mr. Bennett has to tell of them becomes a foolish intrusion.

It is, indeed, a foolish thing in itself. Alan Frith-Walters, a middle-aged but potentially romantic business-man, unexpectedly encounters on the *train de luxe*, Pearl, his scarcely known daughter-in-law. She tells him that she has decided to leave his son and her husband, Jack, because the fanatical boy intends to stand as a Labour candidate. Jack overtakes them in an aeroplane. There is a slight but sufficiently shaking accident. The book ends in explanations and reconciliations and a great riotous noise caused by Mr. Bennett's customary rejoicing over the unreasonableness and unfailing rightness of woman. We know that women are unreasonable and unfailingly right : if we did not we should have no excuse, for Mr. Bennett has told us so on numerous occasions, told us loud and clear, has even come and shouted in our ear. But this particular repetition of the eternal theme suddenly strikes one

as tiresome, because the chain of events by which it is suspended is so silly. Mr. Bennett casually tells us that Alan knew next to nothing about his daughter-in-law, Pearl, and, even more casually, allows us to know as much about her husband, Jack. As for Alan himself, he is the middle-aged man of youthful heart, who first distinctly made his appearance among Mr. Bennett's pages in *The Pretty Lady*. Here his speciality is trying to read Wordsworth's *Prelude*. But his speciality is not a matter of great importance. Once Mr. Bennett has defined him, one can foresee his behaviour on every important occasion, and of the behaviour of his womenfolk one can foresee at any rate this, that Mr. Bennett will represent it as being enchantingly unforeseeable.

The real substance of the book is an exquisitely real and thrilling picture of a night-journey, such as no one else could have made. But Mr. Bennett is really capable of putting this, his essential matter, into a better framework. The plot might have been as trivial as he liked, but he should have made it something that could interest us for what it was worth. The characters, even though they had no purpose but to illustrate a background, should not have been as trivial as these. *Accident* is not worthy of Mr. Bennett, even in his lighter mood.

Lady Russell knows at least this of the novelist's job, that it is a good thing to make your readers dislike some one or more of your characters. A definite dislikableness on one side will do very well to carry off a misty and doubtful likableness on the other. So we have Milly marrying one of the Botts and, over a long period of years, betraying him. Then that particular Bott takes his revenge in his will and we perceive all the Botts who are left as sadly unlovely creatures, who are rather unkind to Milly. I find myself, however, unable to deduce the charm of Milly from the disgustingness of the persons who ill-treated her. Her love-affair with Arthur, the Oxford don who always had a cold, strikes me as being obscure in its details or, when it momentarily emerges from obscurity, rather reptilian. Certain of Milly's actions strike me as being dictated by the author's necessities rather than by anything that could really have been in her heart. Yet Lady Russell has too great a power of invention to need to invent false motives for her characters. The chain of circumstances by which she brings together Milly and her long-lost sister is admirably fabricated, link by link, and her explanation of the sister is beautifully done. But (let me make a personal confession) I do not see the Botts. I cannot place them: I cannot imagine in what society they describe their orbits. And, while not pretending to know all the world, I do surmise that Lady Russell has invented them so that we may dislike them and despise them and feel that we should have behaved otherwise. She does this, indeed, with deft touches of understanding and pity, so that our feeling of superiority may be confined, but I prefer her outright hate as bestowed on the German baron in *The Caravanners* or on the husband in *Vera*. Her gift of writing a sentence that almost cracks like a whip but makes a sound of menacing softness is unimpaired, but she too has written a book illustrative of her skill and unworthy of her true powers.

Miss Elizabeth Bowen has any amount of skill but, fortunately, does not yet know how to use it like a veteran. She has not yet found a formula. What is disturbing in her book is that she seems to be groping about as though she were in search of one, and I fear that in the darkness she may put her hand on the largest and most obvious piece of furniture in the room—the importance of the trivial, the triviality of the important. She can render the meaningless but oppressive moment very well. There is a passage which I should like to quote in full, did it not fill two pages, in which people, sitting out after dinner in an Irish garden during the Black-and-Tan period, see and hear a lorry at a distance. Every phrase of the two pages, every turn of careless attention and careful inattention is exquisitely rendered, and one is left with

a memory of a real experience. But Miss Bowen suffers from an obstinate determination not to be melodramatic—which so often results, as here, in being ineffective. She has not yet written an effective book : whether she ever does will depend on the end of her search after a formula.

For some reason which I am not able even to suggest there has not yet been written a good novel about the naval side of the war. Mr. Forester has come close to it : he has come even closer to writing a good long short-story. For this book has pieces of almost shameless padding in it. The pages describing the courtship of Brown's mother by Brown's schoolmaster *must* have been expanded from a sentence or two in the earliest draft, and so must those which describe the activities of the German agent towards the end of the book. But, if these were reduced to their proper proportions (and it will not be hard for the discerning reader so to reduce them), we should be left with an uncommonly fine story. Brown is the outcome of a temporary indiscretion committed by a naval officer and the daughter of a prosperous Nonconformist tradesman. The father never knows of Brown's birth. The mother, with nothing else to live for, dedicates him to the navy. And into the navy eventually he goes as a rating. At last his doomed cruiser is sunk in the Pacific by a German raider, which takes on board him and two or three other survivors and then puts into Resolution Island for repairs. Brown, his maternally inculcated sense of duty strongly working in him, cannot resign himself to this. Slackly guarded (for why should he attempt escape in such a spot ?) he swims ashore with a rifle, a few rounds of ammunition, and a very little food and water and, among the knife-edged rocks of the lava-island, proceeds to hold up the enemy's repairs as long as he can. He himself perishes horribly in the end, but not before he has delayed the raider long enough to ensure her destruction. Mr. Forester has written other books before this. Each one of them has been interesting in its way, and it has been only too obvious that the author's chief interest in each was to see whether he could write a book in that particular way. Having read *Brown on Resolution*, I do implore him to take himself a little more seriously and to concern himself less with mere *tours de force*. He is, and he has already amply demonstrated it, as clever as a cartload of monkeys. He might now take that fact for granted and settle down to a struggle with something worthy of his skill. He, too, might very well turn into a veteran novelist, but it would be better to be that than to be a brilliant dilettante who is for ever playing exhibition games and extending the professionals, but will never undertake a severe course of training so as to challenge the champions. Mr. Forester might conceivably be a champion if he would, but at present he exhibits too much levity. In spite of this, his *Brown on Resolution* is a book that no one can read without being deeply excited.

The shockers of the month are *The Death of Laurence Vining*, by Mr. Alan Thomas and *The Corpse on the Mat*, by Mr. Milward Kennedy. Mr. Thomas does not, perhaps, play quite fair with the reader. But the competition is growing exceedingly severe and the contrivance of his murder is exceedingly good. Mr. Kennedy plays quite fair, and the contrivance of *his* murder is also exceedingly good. Further to praise him, he makes his characters amusing in themselves. But must detective stories always centre round murders ? I have for a long time read none of first rank that did not, save Mr. Richard Keverne's *William Cook—Antique Dealer*. That, however, is an excellent book and other specialists might take a lesson from it.

EDWARD SHANKS

BELLES-LETTRES

A TREASURY OF ENGLISH APHORISMS. By LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH. Constable. 7s. 6d.

FIERY GRAINS. By H. R. L. SHEPPARD and H. P. MARSHALL. Longmans Green. 3s. 6d.

A TRAMP'S ANTHOLOGY. By STEPHEN GRAHAM. Peter Davies. 6s.

WRITING ALOUD. By J. D. BERESFORD. Collins. 6s.

GENERALLY SPEAKING. By G. K. CHESTERTON. Methuen. 6s.

WONDERFUL OUTINGS. By E. V. KNOX. Methuen. 5s.

ESSAYS IN SATIRE. Fr. RONALD KNOX. By Sheed & Ward. 7s. 6d.

IT is difficult, this side doxology, sufficiently to praise Mr. Pearsall Smith's *Treasury of English Aphorisms*. In the first place it directly refutes the absurd theory that the Englishman is not an Aphoristic animal; in the second it proves, by the time honoured method of providing an exception, the rule that of all dull books, books of Aphorisms are the dullest; thirdly, it is the first really satisfactory collection of English Aphorisms. Dr. Johnson proposed, but never executed the work, *Maxims, Characters and Sentiments, after the Manner of La Bruyère, Collected out of the Ancients, with Apothegms*; but, strangely enough, there was no mention of Apothegms by English writers, although the works of Bacon, Selden, Fuller, Shaftesbury and Halifax, to mention only a few, were already in existence. There can be little doubt that the unpopularity of collections of Aphorisms among English people is due to our national habit of winking at unpleasant facts. After all, the desire to see himself as others saw him was first expressed by a Scotsman, and this is not without its significance:

Few things [Mr. Pearsall Smith says] are more shocking to those who practise the arts of success than the frank description of those arts; that one should practise what one preaches is generally agreed, but anyone who has the indiscretion to preach what both he and his hearers practise must always incur—as Lord Chesterfield has incurred—the gravest moral reprobation.

It is, of course, peculiarly true of the English, for we have set up to ourselves the idol of material success, albeit cloaked in the sober trappings of the highest motives and most moral purposes. This preoccupation with the world is reflected in the sayings of our Aphorists. They have, unlike the French Penseurs, concerned themselves less with the analysis of the human heart, its passions and petty meanness, than with the exposing of those same arts whereby their country and their neighbours have achieved political and material advantage. If, for this reason, their sayings rarely display the bitterness and disillusionment so characteristic of La Rochefoucauld, Pascal, or La Bruyère, they yet have about them a certain air of prosaic worldliness and matter of fact cynicism even more distressing. But for the French Chamfort we can shew the English Hazlitt, a man endued with as contemptuous an hatred of his fellow-men and as ready to dip his pen in vitriol. St. Beuve noticed the poetic quality of the English Aphorism as contrasted with the cold, classical, almost scientific Pensée. It is this poetic quality which lends such a peculiar and intimate charm to the sayings of English Aphorists. One can hardly imagine Joubert saying with Emerson: "Not always can flowers, pearls, poetry, protestations, nor even home in another

heart, content the awful soul that dwells in clay," or Rochefoucauld with Sir Thomas Browne: "The heart of man is the place the Devils dwell in: I feel sometimes an Hell within myself, Lucifer keeps his court in my breast, Legion is revived in me." But this poetry is dangerous for it leads some into that fantastical kingdom upon whose throne sound has displaced sense. Thus Blake wrote Aphorisms of an extreme beauty but of hardly any sense whatever: "Eternity is in love with the productions of time" or "The tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction." Lest any should suppose that the book resembles the wretched collections of quips and cheap cynicisms which have, of recent years, passed for Anthologies of Aphorisms, I must assure him that not more than half a dozen of Wilde's *mots* are included. Among the Aphorists are found such great names as Sir Thomas Browne, the two Butlers, Berkeley, Blake, Donne, Santayana, Jeremy Taylor, and, of course, Dr. Johnson, whom Mr. Smith describes as a "whale of unequalled proportions." As an introduction there is a delicious essay upon the art of the Aphorist of which it is impossible to say anything but that it is no less delightful than one would expect from the author of *Trivia*. Mr. Smith is himself an accomplished Aphorist and the essay is full of witty and pregnant remarks. To some people the book may appear depressing, with its insistence upon the vanity of human virtues, but to my mind it is far more stimulating than Mr. Sheppard's *Fiery Grains*. "Damn braces, Bless relaxes," said Blake, and if an illustration were wanted it is here to hand. Perhaps it is unfair to compare the two anthologies, their effect being so very different, though their object, I should think, being pretty much the same in the end. Mr. Sheppard would seem to advocate the looking at stars from the gutter, while the Aphorists assert the necessity of realising the depth and filth of the gutter as a preliminary measure. Mr. Sheppard proposes to bring comfort to the distressed by the same means as one would employ in the case of an ostrich, providing a nice heap of sand to hide its head in. The book is the result of collaboration with Mr. H. P. Marshall and is designed to soothe those restless spirits to whom the comforts of "Institutional Religion" prove but cold. This is to be effected by gathering together a number of what Mr. Sheppard calls "Fiery Grains," collected from any source other than that of the "Bible and great devotional books." But, although the effect is one of unadulterated "uplift," one is not to suppose that this is its primary idea. "For heaven's sake," says Mr. Sheppard in his prefatory letter, "For heaven's sake do not think that I am trying to do you good." What he is trying to do, then, must remain shrouded in mystery. The book provides fitting encouragement and admonition upon such important occasions as "Moments of Lust" and of doubt, losing one's faith or one's collar stud, seeing a joke, and having "cold feet." There are many wise and beautiful sayings gathered together *dans cette galère*, and much blurge. This is mostly supplied by Mr. Sheppard himself, who appears twice as many times as any one other author. He complains, again in his letter, that "Parsons are suspect," but if he will write such sentimental trash what can he expect?

Mr. Stephen Graham's *Tramp's Anthology* is one of the specialised collections to which we have grown accustomed. It is composed of poetry and prose connected mostly with the open-air and particularly with walking. It is a small book eminently suitable for the ruck-sack or the pocket.

Most people have a desire to see the wheels go round, generally satisfied by wireless or motor cars. In *Writing Aloud* Mr. Beresford shews us the wheels in the novelist's mind. It is a fascinating book, but in a way rather disappointing. Either he tells us too much or too little; it is neither an essay nor a penetrating analysis. Probably this is because the story of "J-J," had it ever been written, would have made a novel

neither good nor bad, merely above the average. But it is extremely interesting to watch the working out of these characters, and the blight of Mr. Beresford's great fault as a novelist—his tendency to make of his characters mere walking ideas—gradually spreading over the story. Quite early on in the book he says, "I suppose I am hankering after some sort of a thesis again." It is too true. The basically simple neo-Victorian heroine "J-J" takes upon herself the rarified air of an embodied theory; the simple little love story is transmuted into an allegory of the several forms of religious experience.

In *Generally Speaking* Mr. Chesterton has collected a number of his weekly essays in the *Illustrated London News* of which "every page", the cover informs us, "impels one to think." They range from Detective Novels to Buddhism and from the Comic Spirit to Funeral Customs. Mr. Chesterton is never, of course, dull, and rarely, when you consider the immense spaces over which his pen roves, superficial. However much one may disagree with his conclusions, and sometimes lament his prejudices, one usually finds that there is a great deal to be said upon his side of the question and not quite so much upon one's own as one had been used to suppose. The greater part of *Wonderful Outings* has already appeared in the pages of *Punch*. Once a week "Evoe" is delightful, but in bulk, these sophisticated pleasantries, for some reason, are not quite so effective.

Fr. Ronald Knox, a rare thing to-day, is really witty. *Essays in Satire* include several pieces which one is glad to see reprinted, Sherlock Holmes, Reunion all Round, and the Baconian exercise in the Authorship of *In Memoriam*. Occasionally in his dealings with the Established Church a claw is in evidence, but the scratch is so delicate and so well-deserved that none could take offence. Perhaps the best thing in the book is the preface, which is an essay upon Satire and Humour and an analysis of English humour in particular. This has, of course, been done before, but I do not think anyone else has explained that "a Scotsman is more funny than a Frenchman just as a monkey is more amusing than a dog; he is nearer the real thing." Any criticism of Fr. Knox's theory of Satire is disarmed when he says at the end of his preface that, after all, he is not at all sure that he has not arrived at an opposite conclusion himself.

ROBERT TUNSTILL

LITERARY HISTORY AND CRITICISM

A SURVEY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, 1730-1780. By OLIVER ELTON. Arnold. Two volumes. 32s.

THE PROFESSION OF LETTERS. By A. S. COLLINS. Routledge. 12s. 6d.

LITERARY ETHICS. By H. M. PAULL. Thornton Butterworth. 15s.

THE reason why Professor Elton has not wholly succeeded in his latest survey is that he has tried to embrace too wide a reading, to compress too much into seven hundred pages, with the result that the scholar will find too many omissions and the casual reader too many additions to satisfy or entertain him. The period beginning at 1730 tests the critic from every point of view : it gives him the chance of expatiating on Gray and Smollett, Goldsmith, Johnson and Fielding, of telling what is universally known, and praising what is generally admired. It gives him the opportunity of discovering what is scarcely concealed, Shenstone, for example, and of showing a fine scholarship, secure in the world's ignorance of this, beyond any other, period of modern literature. Professor Elton comes out of these tests only a little dishevelled : where his reading fails, his sense of humour comes to the rescue ; he is pleasant to read, sometimes even sprightly, and, had he only taken more time in preparing his book, might well have been finally authoritative. As it is, he shows that his mind fits more easily into the following century, with which he has already dealt, and in which there is less pioneer work to be done. For it is in pioneer work that Professor Elton fails. He can discourse appropriately enough on the eminences, adequately on the plains, but barely indeed on the valleys of his vast subject. There is no mention whatever of Thomas Russell, the best sonneteer before Bowles, or of Bampfylde, almost his equal: Gray's *Elegy* is criticised at length without a word of Headley's witty parody of it. In the section given to Spenserian imitations, Melmoth's *Lycon and Euphormius* is not mentioned, nor, in the chapters given to religious philosophy, is there a word of his father's *Great Importance of a Religious Life*, which ran through innumerable editions. We are told nothing of Hurdis or Keate, and only a single phrase about the delightful eclogues (presumably) which Professor Elton calls " the unclerical moralisings of the Rev. Charles Jenner, incumbent of Claybrook (a suggestive name)." There is more excuse for ignoring Francis Mundy whose lovely *Needwood Forest* has been steadily neglected since it was published, but something should have been said of his friends, Anna Seward (though her period is really later), Sir Brooke Boothby and the literary enthusiasts of Lichfield. Their connections with Johnson alone should have been enough to make them worth a page. It is to unearth these and others like them that books on the eighteenth century should be written : the more prominent obscurities have already felt the limelight : compared to some of his contemporary equals, Cuthbert Shaw is a blazing celebrity, Langhorne has caught as much attention as Milton: yet at the bottom of the Batheaston vase is a heap of anthology pieces, and among the poems of Mickle or Lord Hervey some that would sell in reprints, were the paper sufficiently decked, the binding satisfactorily artistic, and the price unusually high.

I am glad that Professor Elton has a good word to say for Thomas Warton the younger, and particularly for his melodious sonnet *On a Blank leaf of " Drydale's Monasticon "* ; Sir John Henry Moore is also given a place as a fore-runner of the satiric Byron : this, in a way, he is, but he is also remarkable for being the most

"period" poet that has ever written ; his works are a sort of literary tea-shop of the genteel kind, kept by the most genuine, it reduced, ladies. The *Chelsea Pensioner*, for instance, combines every affectation of the period with the most elegant sensibility and a decent, unenthusiastic dulness, proper to be read to Lady Miller in the back-scene shade of a synthetic ruin near Bath. In writing this sentence, I realise the true fault of Professor Elton : he does not appreciate the *fun* of the eighteenth century ; he is too much engrossed in the reason, the straightforwardness of the great figures ; he concentrates too much on his own trim, nice arrangement of theory and sequence, and, consequently he misses the quippishness which, to an astute modern, lies under all this Palladian decency, the delightful rooms behind so exact a façade.

Mr. Collins's book deals with the most pleasant period in the history of authorship—the transition from Grub Street to Albemarle Street, from the gutter-scrapings of Savage to the comfortable sherry and madeira-cake of John Murray. The seeds of this transition were planted by Miles Coverdale in 1535, and grew in the dreary soil of Jeremy Taylor, Melmoth, and the popular theologians until the end of the eighteenth century. By that time a grand religious tree had grown up in every English home from this simple beginning, and only the repercussions of machinery and the French Revolution were needed to make it bear secular fruit, to scatter secular literature copiously abroad, and knock Grub Street over in a rain of guineas. By 1780, generous prices were already paid to the famous, especially in periodical journalism, but in 1830 Byron was getting some £3,000 for three plays, and even Milman a few years before had been given £500 for his *Belshazzar*. The actual transactions, however, are not nearly so important as the slow change in relations between author and publisher, on which Mr. Collins is especially entertaining. At the end of his period there was no longer any question of genius dropping a furtive manuscript into the hard care of his publisher ; genius would bring it to a handsome, witty dinner at Mr. Longman's or to Blackwood's literary levées :

Such a custom, flourishing nobly in the conviviality of that age, could not help but bring about a sympathetic understanding between the two branches of the profession of literature. It cemented the common cause of author and publisher and the mingling of author with author tended towards an *esprit de corps* in the profession. It gave the successful author acquaintance with the men whom success sometimes deserted and whom he thereby had the chance to help ; and he often took the chance, and became, as we note later, a worthy patron. On the publisher's side, when the publisher began his dealing with an author, he would often support him through difficult times, and, as Murray did with Washington Irving, end by paying out of friendship and esteem more than the works justified commercially.

The two other changes which developed during this half-century were the revival of patronage, though in a new form, and the dissemination of reading among the country-people and the working-classes. This dissemination was largely caused by the flood of Popular Classics which poured over the market :

In fact, between them, Harrison, Bell and Cooke have some claim to be named the greatest educational force of the last decade of the [18th] century. Their little, convenient, attractive volumes found their way into the homes of the new middle class everywhere, and the taste for reading was born where it had never had a chance to be born before.

The French Revolution was another urge towards wider reading. Disturbing ideas fluttered through the remotest countryside and made a necessity of education, while in the towns an excited population, spurred by the grinding of new mental and material engines, threw aside tract, abolished booklet, and turned to literature. So, by the end of this period, Borrow could write thus :

One day I found myself about noon at the bottom of Oxford Street. . . . Happening to cast my eyes around, it suddenly occurred to me that something uncommon was expected ; people were standing in groups on the pavement—the upstairs windows of the houses were thronged with faces, especially those of women, and many of the shops were partly, and not a few entirely, closed. . . . What could be the matter ? Just then I heard various voices cry “ There it comes ! ” and all heads were turned up Oxford Street, down which a hearse was slowly coming : . . . “ Whose body is in that hearse ? ” said I to a dapper-looking individual, seemingly a shopkeeper, who stood beside me on the pavement, looking at the procession. “ The mortal relics of Lord Byron.” . . . and then I turned my eyes upon the hearse. . . . This man, this Byron had for many years past been the demigod of England, and his verses the daily food of those who read, from the peer to the draper’s assistant : all were admirers, or rather worshippers, of Byron.

The revival of patronage was the outcome of subtler relations between author and publisher, and, in consequence, of the social recognition of a successful author. It became no longer enough to offer a chaplaincy for a treacly sonnet, a bishopric for a bushel of odes. Literary men were not to be dismissed so lightly, and gradually the new patronage arose, a patronage of real friendship, finding expression in dinners and *salons* ; or when money was given, it was now cloaked under the gentility of a “ permanent loan.” The publishers had a share in all this. Mr. Collins gives a picture of Constable “ striding up and down the room crying, ‘ My God, I am all but the author of the Waverley novels,’ but, in fact, he was all but the author of the new conditions for writers.”

In any case, there was no further question of that stuffiness of which Mr. Collins gives another picture ; he is writing about Crabbe’s English Essay on Botany :

Though he had made so much progress with it as to approach Dodsley about its being published, he put it aside because of the remonstrances of the vice-master of Trinity College, Cambridge, “ who, though little tinged with academical peculiarities, could not stomach the notion of degrading such a subject by treating of it in a modern language.”

Altogether, this is an illuminating book, agreeably written, and well enough put together to give a clear collection of facts not, indeed, unknown, but hitherto forgotten.

An immediate dilemma is caused by the sight of Mr. Paull’s book—whether the dust-cover or the boards beneath are the more horrible. The inside is scarcely encouraging, being printed almost without margins on a kind of blotting-paper, but the matter, if it can be read, is well enough. Yet somehow it is a little difficult to find very good, for, by its nature, it can have neither theory nor constructive idea to leaven the catalogue of literary crimes. So long a book, devoted solely to actions for which the motive is invariably gain or notoriety, cannot avoid being a little stolid. Nor is it quite complete enough to be a work of reference. There is, for instance, no word of the Logan-Bruce controversy. Still, it is well enough.

ALAN PRYCE-JONES

BIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS

THE LIFE AND UNCOMMON ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN DUDLEY BRADSTREET. Edited by G. S. TAYLOR, with an introduction by E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN. Hamilton. 10s. 6d.

MALICE DOMESTIC. By WILLIAM ROUGHEAD. W. GREEN (Edinburgh). 10s. 6d.

THE LIFE OF ALCIBIADES. By E. F. BENSON. Benn. 12s. 6d.

SIR EDMUND HORNBY : AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY. With an introduction by D. L. MURRAY. Constable. 18s.

ADVENTURES IN THE REVOLUTION AND UNDER THE CONSULATE. By MOREAU DE JONNES. Edited by SIR JOHN FORTESCUE. Davies. 7s. 6d.

THE roguery of eighteenth-century England was something quite peculiar to itself. Allowing for differences in manners and customs, it may be said that eighteenth-century lawyers spoke and thought much as they do to-day, that artists dreamed the same dreams that Englishmen have always dreamed, generals rapped out the same oaths, politicians made the same sort of speeches and the same promises. And when an eighteenth-century clergyman, like Parson Woodforde, sits down to write his diary he expresses a point of view, an attitude towards life, hardly differing at all from that of the average parish priest to-day. But the rogue was a man apart. Indeed he seems to us now more foreign than English—though his evil doings have been enshrined for ever in that monumental work, misnamed *The English Rogue*. For did he not laugh as he sinned? And what Englishman has ever done that? We are solemn sinners; we take even our illicit pleasures rather sadly, as anyone may observe in the London streets at night. And perhaps that is why we all admire a cheerful highwayman and crowd to see his representation on the stage. Almost certainly it has something to do with the new vogue for the literature of eighteenth-century roguery.

Captain Dudley Bradstreet, whose candid confessions have just been edited by Mr. G. S. Taylor, was by birth an Irishman, but he came over here at an early age and fits naturally into the London scene. He was never hanged, though he certainly deserved it and came within measurable distance of it when he acted as a Whig spy during the Jacobite invasion of 1745. He was never even thrashed, according to his own account, for his victims were mostly women. His account of London life is as good as anything in the *English Rogue*. Walk up old Drury Lane with him and hear him describe with a cynical chuckle the kind of life that went on behind those gracefully decaying house-fronts! Though he had a natural preference for earning his living dishonestly, he was quick to take advantage of any kind of opening—as when he successfully circumvented a silly D.O.R.A. regulation of those days prohibiting the sale of gin in quantities of less than two gallons. The mob were “clamorous for their beloved liquor,” and Bradstreet succeeded in supplying them without breaking the law. This is a fairly credible story compared with his boastful accounts of his conquests among women, or of the unexampled courage and address with which he, Bradstreet, frightened Charles Edward’s army into retreating from Derby, when they might have gone on unopposed to London. Mr. E. H. W. Meyerstein, who contributes an introduction, seems to rate Bradstreet’s evidence on this point far too

high. It is possible that he may have sneaked into Derby before the Prince left ; it is possible that he may even have ascertained that the council had met and decided on retreat ; it is quite impossible that he should have been invited to be present and give his advice—especially as he places the meeting in the middle of the night, whereas it really took place in the morning ! I observe that he describes the uniform of the Prince's bodyguard correctly ; but again, anyone in Derby might have told him that. Bradstreet was a liar, and while we may gratefully accept his general descriptions of London life—his “ atmosphere,” to use an overworked word—it seems absurd to take his word on any matter of historical importance. He is no more to be believed as a spy than as a lover. Evidently his Whig employers agreed with me, for they seem to have consistently refused him any monetary reward for that great *coup* at Derby, which saved the Hanoverian dynasty. But as long as we do not take him too seriously we shall find him a very entertaining rogue. Whether he is cheating his Irish school-fellows out of their pocket-money or making love to a wealthy widow, he always keeps his temper and his sense of humour, is always ready to laugh at himself. In addition to this book of reminiscences, he also wrote a play, and built great hopes upon it. Alas, it was too much even for the eighteenth-century stomach ! The magistrates suppressed it, after only four performances—just four nights of crowded glory !

I have said that the inhabitants of this country are, on the whole, rather solemn sinners. That does not mean, of course, that they are, as a nation, unable to see the humour in crime ; but only that the actual criminals among them fail to detect it. Criminals—especially murderers—are great egoists, and egoists can usually see the funny side of everything and everybody except themselves. That is why nearly all great crimes—and murders in particular—are comic as well as terrible ; that is why we giggle at them, even as we avert our horrified gaze. No one knows this better than Mr. Roughead, that famous collector and re-teller of half-forgotten trials in the Scottish courts. Under his hand, the laborious assassinations by poison, carried out by Dr. Pritchard of Glasgow, assume a dry, ironic humour—though nothing would have astonished the doctor more than to learn that his villainies would become the target for a scholar's wit. We have also the well-known cases of John Galt and Eliza Fenning, and the unsolved mystery of Florence Bravo of Balham, and other crimes of equal fame, all retold and summarised in Mr. Roughead's own deft way. For those who lack either the time or the energy to turn up the original reports of the trials, there could be no pleasanter guide through the lurid chronicles of crime. Mr. Roughead adds an interesting chapter on the criminal types to be found in the novels of Joseph Conrad, with whom he often corresponded on this subject.

A sinner of a higher type—but still a sinner—is Mr. Benson's latest subject, Alcibiades. No one can manage a biographical sketch better than Mr. Benson ; yet the choice is surprising. Mr. Benson seems so incurably and delightfully a Romantic ; and even now, as we close the book after enjoying every page of it, the impression remains that the whole thing must have happened far from Athens and in some other age. Mr. Benson was more at home with Drake. This biography is not only very cleverly but very carefully and honestly done—there is no attempt, for instance, to shirk those awkward moral questions that must arise in any frank discussion of the life led by an Athenian youth in the time of Alcibiades—but it remains not quite satisfying, in a manner and to a degree which I find it difficult to explain. I can only express the humble hope that Mr. Benson will return to England and the men of the Renaissance.

Sir Edmund Hornby has been praised on all sides for his frankness, and this posthumous book of memoirs is certainly one of the most unstudied performances

we have seen for some time. "Mellow and truculent" is a fair description of the style. It could hardly have appeared in the author's lifetime. Nor is it a book to be taken too seriously, in spite of its undoubted charm. Hornby lived for many years in the Levant, but most of his opinions seem to have been formed within a few weeks of his arrival and are of a kind common to every Englishman abroad. Now and then he had flashes of wisdom. He saw, for instance, the great possibilities in that ancient fighting race, the Armenians, now deserted and reduced to slavery once more. Sometimes the mantle of the prophet descends upon him: he visualises a League of Nations (or something very like it) and a British occupation of Palestine. The real value of the book lies in its breezy, slap-dash style—as though the author were speaking to us at this moment—and its remarkably frank descriptions of some of Hornby's official chiefs.

The latest addition to Sir John Fortescue's collection of "Soldiers' Tales" finds himself in distinguished company, but bears the comparison well. Regarded merely as a spectator and narrator of lusty events, Moreau de Jonnés, soldier and scientist, who fought in the Revolutionary armies and those of the Consulate while still a boy; who witnessed the fall of the Tuileries and the massacre of the Swiss Guard; who was present at Toulon and Quiberon Bay and the Glorious First of June—not to mention the mutiny of the Nore, when he was apparently acting as a French spy, and was lucky not to be hanged; who nearly died in the West Indies and suffered incredible hardships while serving under Humbert in the abortive Irish expeditions of 1796 and 1798; and who ended up, at the age of ninety-two, a sober and respected member of the French Academy of Moral and Political Science, having only just missed the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War—Moreau de Jonnés, I say, has a story to tell which ought to be much better known in this benighted country than in fact it is. Moreover he tells it well. You cannot always believe him, but you will never be bored. Although statistics happened to be his speciality as a man of science, his estimates of the numbers of troops engaged on any given occasion were, as Sir John Fortescue points out, wildly inaccurate—especially in regard to the numbers of the enemies defeated or slaughtered by the French. But he is not a calculating liar; except where his own exploits are concerned, he merely repeats what he heard; and he has a real gift for narrative, which excuses all his other faults. His swagger is almost as impressive and lovable as that of his countryman, Coignet; and though he was a fanatical Republican, it is right to add that he always hated the civil war and had the courage openly to express his disgust at the cold-blooded murder of six hundred royalist prisoners after the capture of Quiberon.

CLENNELL WILKINSON

ANTHROPOLOGY

MALLEUS MALEFICARUM. Translated by THE REV. MONTAGUE SUMMERS.
J. Rodker. 35s.

THE VAMPIRE: HIS KITH AND KIN. By THE REV. MONTAGUE SUMMERS.
Kegan Paul. 15s.

THE DISCOVERY OF WITCHES. By THE REV. MONTAGUE SUMMERS. Cayme
Press. 4s. 6d.

THE GENERAL BOOK OF THE TAROT. By A. E. THIERENS. Rider. 6s.

THE MYSTERIES OF BRITAIN. By LEWIS SPENCE. Rider. 10s. 6d.

THE type of man who would become a witch-doctor among savages is still to be found in our midst, although the conditions of the career open to him have changed. This type is never common; and indeed were it so would cease to be impressive. Thus Howitt relates of the Kurnai of Gippsland, an Australian tribe once occupying a considerable tract of country in four semi-independent groups, that one or two medicine-men to each division was the normal ratio. Now in aboriginal Australia such personages were selected, so to say, by competitive examination. On top of the Little-Go through which everyone must pass in the form of initiation-rites involving austerities and endurances likely to bring out in the novice any capacity that he might have for experiences of the mystic kind, a candidate for the doctorate must proceed to face a Great-Go in which none but the genuinely "twice-born" could hope to qualify, and out of which there emerged a being apart, one who, like Dante, had it written on his brow that he had seen Hell.

To-day a School of Metaphysics with a practical course of Experimental Thaumaturgy thereto attached does not figure in the curriculum of any of our leading Universities, possibly for the sufficient reason that nowhere would enough students enter for it to make it pay, after the usual academic barriers had been devised to exclude the unfit—in other words the non-mediumistic. In these circumstances it is no longer possible to distinguish the charlatan from the authentic and licensed practitioner in the occult. For clearly there should be a Faculty of Occultists whose business it must be to discover and train up the few whose special gifts entitle them to maintain the true tradition. As it is, there is no accredited body of experts to which one can look for a guarantee of good faith and tried efficiency in a professor of the science and art of wonder-working. Certainly, no such attestation is forthcoming from the side of theology. Christianity, in its Northern forms at all events, has latterly displayed no sympathy with the supernatural so far as it verges on the uncanny. There is, in fact, nothing supernatural at all about perfect goodness such as is conceived to be the chief attribute of God. For the rest, a British bishop is almost overpoweringly sane; and even deans do not often stray far from the paths of the plain man. On the other hand, the psychologists are rather the rivals than the authorisers and abettors of the mystery-mongers. No doubt the name of psychology is taken by some in vain; but those who are its publicly acknowledged votaries accept the working principles of empirical science, and by so doing are bound to pursue a naturalistic, that is, a common-sense, line of explanation as far as they can and for all that it is worth. Thus their job as they understand it is to cut the ground from under the feet of the man who takes the supernormal at its face-value. To see a ghost may always cause a certain shock; but it must be more disturbing to ordinary experience

to encounter a seeming visitation from the dead than to undergo what is forthwith taken as a warning that the stomach is out of order. Respectable society, then, knows no association of dealers in the mysterious, of which membership confers a right to practise or even to preach. Those of them who are not frauds are at least amateurs. This being so, practising has become a disreputable form of industry, having to lurk underground so as to escape the attention of an unsympathetic magistracy. Preaching, however, is less dangerous. Nay, if it rarely brings honour, it may be highly remunerative in the way of pelf. Hence the witch-doctor of to-day is essentially a writer—having, it may be, considerable erudition as part of his stock-in-trade.

In the course of a recent case a coroner in Pennsylvania is reported to have said that 90,000 persons in that State were believers in Voodooism. As such wide-spread credulity is presumably not confined to this otherwise so flourishing member of the Union, it might be calculated that several millions of dollar-owning citizens await exploitation at the hands of one who knows how, by the use of his pen, to make the flesh of the Voodooist creep. Again, there is a large class of more intelligent persons who enjoy that which makes the flesh creep for its own sake. To get the maximum of satisfaction from the creepy, considered as an end in itself, one should be neither a believer nor an unbeliever, but a half-believer. The unconscious which is wholly serious must participate in the phantasy as well as the conscious and critical part of the mind, which is always by comparison playful. Those, then, who taste deep down as a real fear what their better judgment tells them all the while to be illusory are attracted to the literature of magic, as the drunkard to doubtful spirits, chiefly because it "tickles their innards." Thus between these aesthetic dram-drinkers on the one hand, and on the other the craven crowd of those who are veritably witch-ridden and who people the penumbra of human experience with grisly shapes, there is a profitable market for teratography, as the art of writing-up the diabolic might be termed.

Now, while religion must be taken to stand for something comforting and good, magic belongs to the daunting and bad side of life; and this whether it ranks as black magic or as white. White magic, it is true, professes to be a counter-magic, a neutralizing of the wizard's nefarious operations by somehow beating him at his own game. In practice, however, exorcism is a sordid trade. It implies a theoretical acquiescence in the principles on which black magic rests, together with a technical acquaintance with methods that can cope with it on its own plane. There is, in fact, no reason, so far as knowledge and skill are concerned, why the same man should not indulge in black and white magic as occasion offers. Thus it is not unknown along the countryside that a reputed wizard should offer to cure someone that he declares to have been overlooked; whereupon his dark predictions of what is likely to happen if he is not called in secure his engagement to prescribe a cure on his own terms. The slightest cross-examination of his patient, however, will elicit the fact that the latter is by no means grateful to his leech; but on the contrary is as suspicious as he is fearful of him. Magical power is, in short, as the Freudians say, "ambivalent"—a power to blast or to bless, to kill or to cure; and, as wielded by an individual and without public authority, the power is on the whole likely to be used for selfish and malignant ends. Or, to put the same thing in another way, if one did not believe in black magic at all, there would be no need to believe in white, and a lot of trouble and expense would be saved. Envious, then, is the attitude of the sceptic who holds that spell and counter-spell alike come out of the same bag of tricks. *Cantat vacuus coram latrone*. Since his mind is void of bogeys the tough-minded person does not have to buy the medicine—or the books—of the bogey-man.

It might perhaps be urged, however, in defence of the purveyor of wizardry that,

whatever his intention, he is in reality a contributor to science, since he calls attention to facts which might otherwise be neglected or even wilfully ignored. The reply must surely be that scientific work inspired by an unscientific intention is a contradiction in terms. Truth cannot follow in the train of those who batten on the fears of the vulgar. In a pre-scientific age, indeed, as when *Malleus Maleficarum* was written, there was some excuse for the solemn retailing of all the crude stuff inherited by the European peasant from his savage forbears, and oppressing him as a nightmare may still oppress the sleeper who is only half awake. For terrorism was as yet the only known method of politics; while spiritual and temporal domination were scarcely distinguishable so long as ecclesiastic and statesman tended to be one. But to reprint it now for any other purpose than to illustrate a page of her history of which Europe has small reason to be proud is to try to set back the hands of the clock. All the subtleties of the medieval mind, so well disciplined as it was in pure as opposed to applied logic, could make little sense of this farrago of old wives' tales so ruthlessly extracted from the old wives themselves by means of the rack and on their way to the stake—or, more commonly in England, to the gallows. The fact would seem to be that the most systematic demonologies remain empty of intelligible content. Religion has all man's social and moral experience to draw on when it constructs its conception of God. But the devil is bare negation—as when the Irishman says “devil a bit”, meaning “nothing at all.” When one tries to get behind all the alleged blood-curdling manifestations of the diabolical to something real, one abuts, not on an *O Altitudo*, but on an Aristophanic *Dinus*, an almighty Tee-to-tum—in other words, the whirling brain of an ancient savage or a modern moron. It is a poor theology that bases its case on miracles, but demonology has nothing to go on except marvels, and these of a long and disreputable order. Take vampires or were-wolves. If the “malignant supernatural,” as we are bidden to call it, has nothing better with which to scare us, who sleep no longer in the wild woods—*stabula alta ferarum*—but within sound of the policeman's boots on the pavement, it is pretty well played out. *Dracula* transferred to a London suburb would read flat. The weak-minded can thus afford to dismiss their fears and toy with the lighter magics—with the Tarot, for instance, which is a system of “cartomancy” (dreadful word!). Or they may seek to revive Druidism. Recently Mr. Kendrick, writing with the scientific caution that one expects from the British Museum, showed the evidence for an enlightened order of druids in pre-Roman Britain to be almost *nil*. But Mr. Spence knows more about them, and is in touch with their mystic lore in the form of a Secret Tradition—a secret that may be shared by disbursing a reasonable sum at a book-shop.

No, these wares of the modern witch-doctor are rubbish, and pernicious rubbish in so far as their object is to encourage belief in the fouler fancies of an obsolete savagery. The anthropologist can sympathize in a way with the witch-doctor of yore. He was the leading man of his day, the only sort of “intellectual” in existence; and his mental confusion was at least pervaded by a high resolve to bedevil his less intelligent followers into the primitive equivalent of a state of law and order. But no sensible man to-day wants to go back to an age of innocence which was anything but bliss for all concerned. On the other hand, the fool is ever with us, and the fool will go whithersoever he is led. Those, then, who deliberately set themselves to convert a survival into a revival by summoning the superstitious to the Witches' Sabbath are, in the eyes of the man of science, at their best blind leaders of the blind and at their worst humbugs whose present address is Grub-Street and whose ultimate destination may well be the place about which they write with so much seeming conviction.

R. R. MARETT

NEW EDITIONS AND REPRINTS

MR. GUY CHAPMAN'S recent fine edition of Beckford's *Travel Diaries* has now a uniform companion in *Vathek* (Constable. 2 vols. 31s. 6d.). The edition, which is illustrated and limited to a thousand copies, is the first complete edition, as it includes those "Episodes" which Mr. Lewis Melville unearthed and published twenty years ago. The original French text only is given : a translation might well follow.

MR. MARMADUKE PICKTHALL'S *Oriental Encounters* has been added to Messrs. Heinemann and Cape's "Travellers' Library." We strongly recommend it ; and, in so doing, may still more strongly recommend the same author's *Said the Fisherman*. No modern writer has got closer to the East.

RECENT "Everymans" (Dent, 2s. each) include Mill and Mary Wolstonecraft on Women, a selection (*A Letter from Sydney*) from the works of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, abductor and statesman, Chesterfield's *Letters to His Son*, the first volume of a selection from Elizabethan and Jacobean *Shorter Novels* made by Mr. Saintsbury, and above all a complete Urquhart and Motteux *Rabelais*, with an agreeable introduction by Mr. D. B. Wyndham Lewis.

THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS seems to have started a regular series of Short Story selections within the "World's Classics." Some of the latest to reach us are *Short Stories of the South Seas* and *Selected Austrian Short Stories* : each of these will provide our numerous anthologists with excellent material. The "World's Classics" also now includes Trollope's *Sir Harry Hotspur of Humblethwaite*, a "period" book of the first water.

THE SCHOLARTIS PRESS'S latest "rescue" is *Paul Ferroll*, by Mrs. Archer Clive (7s. 6d.), an engaging work which scandalised our grandparents but would have been relished by our parents. Mrs. Clive was a Wilkie Collins born out of season.

WE propose shortly to devote a long article to the work of the Golden Cockerel Press. The *Lamia* (3 guineas) and the first volume of the *Canterbury Tales* (6 guineas, each severely limited with a few vellum copies), magnificently printed and adorned with woodcuts by Messrs. Robert Gibbings and Eric Gill, are far too splendid to be described in a paragraph. It is certain, however, that collectors will want them long after we are dead.

WE recommend collectors of fine editions, and especially those who are connoisseurs of Greek type, to buy Mr. Basil Blackwell's Shakespeare Head Edition of Pindar (£3 13s. 6d.), which has an introduction and translation (into very dignified English verse) by C. I. Billson, and wood-engravings by John Farleigh. It is a really noble book, and better Greek type has never been seen. There are only two hundred and fifty copies and they should melt, as we hope, the snows will soon melt.